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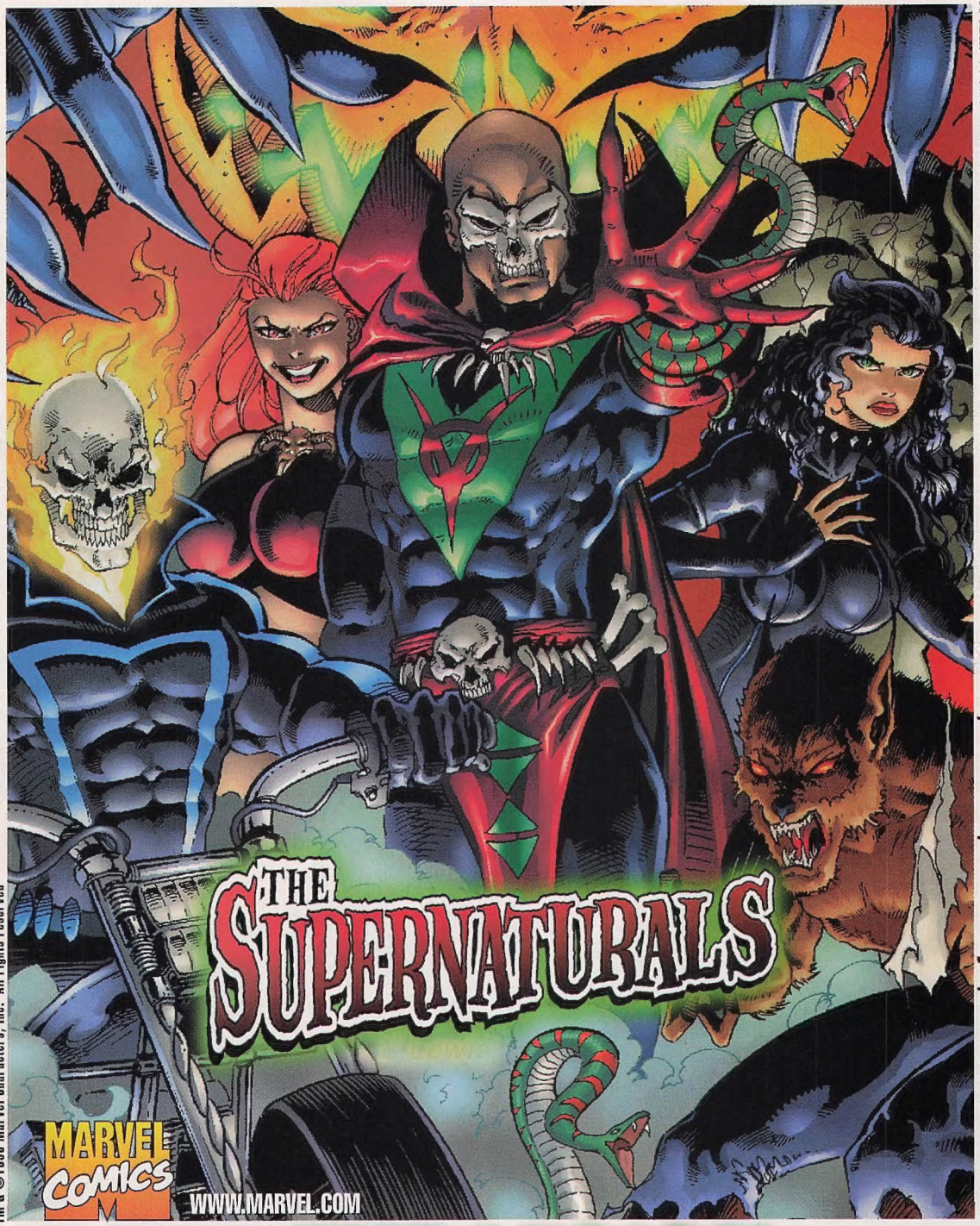

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October Highlights from the House of Ideas!

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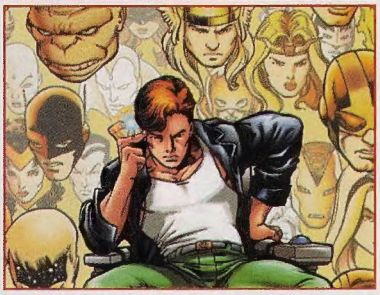
- **Blade #3 (of 6)**
  Why is New Orleans in Morbius's blood?
- **Cable #62**
  "The Nemesis Contract" concludes. Art by Ladronn!
- **Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty #4**
  The Human Torch...our enemy!
- **Daredevil #2**
  By Kevin Smith, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti! Variant Cover!
- **Deadpool: Mission Improbable**
  By Joe Kelly and Ed McGuiness!
- **Deadpool Team-Up Starring Widdle Wade**
  2 Deadpool stories in 1!
- **Fantastic Four #12**
  48 Pages! The FF vs. The FF!
- **Ka-Zar #20**
  Last Issue!
- **Rampaging Hulk #5**
  Guest-starring the Fantastic Four!
- **Spider-Man: Chapter One #1 (of 13)**
  Writer/artist supreme John Byrne with a new spin!
- **Spider-Man: Identity Crisis**
  The first appearances of Dusk! Prodigy! Hornet! Ricochet!
- **The Supernaturals #1 (of 4)**
  What is the "Chaos" event that wiped out every natural hero on Earth?
- **Thor #6**
  Thor vs. Hercules!
- **The Uncanny X-Men #362**
  The Hunt For Xavier continues...
- **X-Man #45**
  The X-Man/Cable crossover begins here!
- **X-Men: The Manga #17**
  Cable and Angel on Muir Island!

On Sale October 14

- **Alpha Flight #17**
  Who or what is "X The Unknown"?
- **Avengers Forever #1 (of 12)**
  Kurt Busiek! Carlos Pacheco! The Kang/Immortus War!



- **Baby's First Deadpool Book**
  Deadpool on how to raise children!
- **Black Panther #2**
  By Priest and Mark Texeira! Variant Covers!
- **Dracula: Lord Of The Undead #1**
  Art by Pat Olliffe! Drac's back!
- **Generation X #45**
  Now Bi-weekly!
- **Giant-Size Spider-Man**
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- **Iron Man #11**
  Guest-starring Carol Danvers and the all-new War Machine!
- **Marvel Universe #7**
  Last issue! The conclusion of the Monster Hunters saga!
- **Mutant X #3**
  Art by Tom Raney!
- **Spider-Girl #3**
  The Fantastic...Five?
- **Spider-Man: The Manga #22**
  Blizzard warnings in July?
- **The Supernaturals #2 (of 4)**
  Written by Brian Pulido and Marc Andreyco!
- **Wolverine: Black Rio**
  Joe Casey! Oscar Jimenez! 48-Page Bookshelf!
- **X-Force/Champions '98**
  The original Champions are back! 48 Pages!
- **X-Men #82**
  The Hunt For Xavier continues...Art by Adam Kubert!

On Sale October 21

- **A-Next #3**
  Return of the Defenders!
- **Captain America #12**
  Written by Mark Waid! Art by Andy Kubert! 48 Pages!
- **Dracula: Lord Of The Undead #2**
  The Count's revenge continues...
- **Encyclopedia Deadpoolica**
  The A to Z of the Merc With A Mouth!
- **Heroes For Hire #18**
  Guest-starring Wolverine!
- **Incredible Hulk #471**
  Art by Ed McGuinness!
- **Marvel Masterworks: The X-Men**
  X-Men #1-10 by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby!
- **Punisher #2 (of 4)**
  Art by Bernie Wrightson!
- **Strange Tales #4**
  Final Issue! Man-Thing and Werewolf By Night!
- **Spider-Man: Chapter One #2 (of 13)**
  John Byrne! Spidey's first meeting with the FF!
- **The Supernaturals #3 (of 4)**
  Covers by Jim Balent!
- **Thunderbolts #21**
  Songbird goes berserk!
- **Union Jack #1 (of 3)**
  Art by John Cassaday!
- **X-Man #46**
  Art by J.H. Williams & Mick Gray!
- **X-Men: The Manga #18**
  Angel is transformed!

On Sale October 28

- **Avengers #11**
  The Mansion is haunted by dead Avengers! Art by Perez!
- **Conan: The Scarlet Sword #1 (of 3)**
  Writer Roy Thomas is back!
- **Deadpool #23**
  "Dead Reckoning" Part 1! 48 Pages!
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  The official Time Lord magazine!
- **Dracula: Lord Of The Undead #3**
  The conclusion!
- **Essential Fantastic Four**
  #1-20 and annual #1! 528 Pages!
- **Generation X #46**
  The return of Forge!
- **Generation X/Dracula '98**
  48 pages! Art by Tomm Coker!
- **Inhumans #2**
  By Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee! Variant Covers!
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  The Son of Juggernaut vs. The Hulk!
- **Marvel Magazine #7**
  Special 1999 preview of Earth X!
- **Marvel Collectable Classics: Chromium X-Men**
  All-new Chromium Cover by Andy Kubert!
- **Slingers #1**
  All-new adventures of Dusk, Ricochet, Hornet and Prodigy!
- **Spider-Man: The Manga #23**
  What is the secret of the Ice Woman?
- **Supernaturals #4 (of 4)**
  The conclusion!
- **Warlock #2 (of 4)**
  An old friend is now an enemy!
- **Wolverine #132**
  "Halloween in Salem Center"!
- **X-Force #84**
  X-Force vs. the Deviants!
- **X-Men: Liberators #2 (of 4)**
  Wolverine! Nightcrawler! Colossus!
- **X-Men Unlimited #21**
  The Return Of Strong Guy! 48 Pages!

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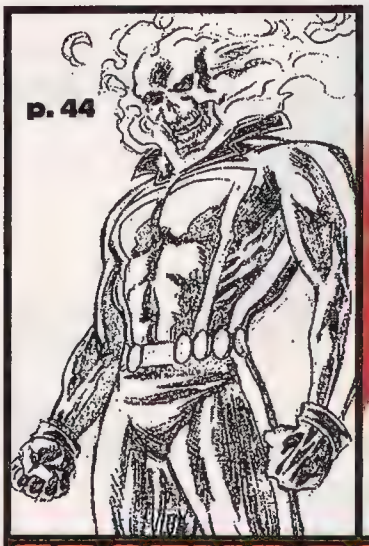
WIZARD contents

THE COMICS MAGAZINE • NUMBER 87 • NOVEMBER 1998



FEATURES

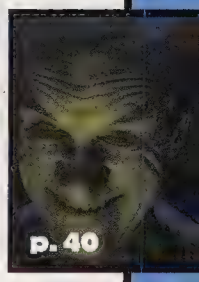
40 DEATH BECOMES HIM
New *Punisher* artist Bernie Wrightson finds comfort in the brutal and bloody world of horror. **By Chris Hutchins**

44 STRANGE BREW
Chaos! Comics' Brian Pulido stirs up the horror at Marvel with *The Supernaturals*. **By Jim McLauchlin**

50 ALL DRESSED UP WITH NO PLACE TO GO
See the winners of the seventh annual Halloween Costume Contest. **By You and the *Wizard* Staff**

58 THE WIZARD Q&A: TODD McFARLANE & GENE SIMMONS
Spawn creator Todd McFarlane and KISS front-man Gene Simmons bang heads to put out KISS toys and comics. **By Jim McLauchlin**

66 BAD COMPANY
Wizard ranks the 10 most dangerous villains alive. Read at your own risk. **By the *Wizard* Staff**



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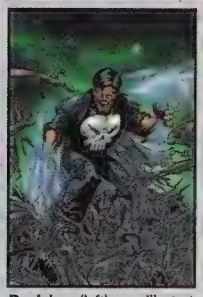
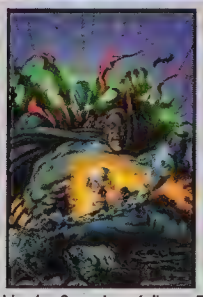
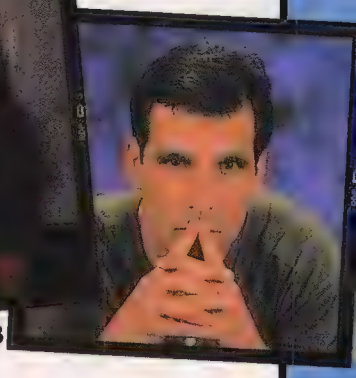




Punisher (left) was illustrated by Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, and colored by Brian Haberlin. Skulk your way to **page 40** to see what horror legend Bernie Wrightson has planned for Marvel's gun-totin' hero. **Batman/Spawn/Ghost Rider** was illustrated by Mark Texeira, and colored by Liquid Graphics. To see if your favorite characters made it into this year's Halloween Costume Contest, lurch on over to **page 50**. **KISS** was illustrated by Angel Medina and Kevin Conrad, and colored by Brian Haberlin. Crawl to **page 58** to see how Gene Simmons and Todd McFarlane work with each other.



Stuff, p. 98

CONTESTS

90 DEADPOOL
Draw us up a pretty picture of Deadpool and you could walk away with one killer prize package including comics, T-shirts and a Deadpool bust!

110 WITCHBLADE
Write us up a spooky story and your loot bag could be filled with original *Witchblade* art, signed comics, CDs and a complete set of Witchblade toys.

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STANDARDS

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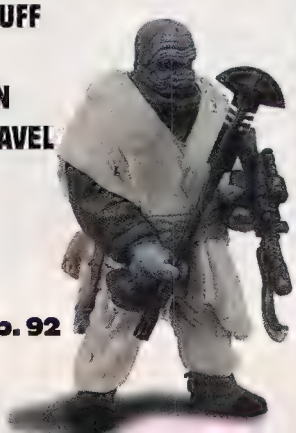

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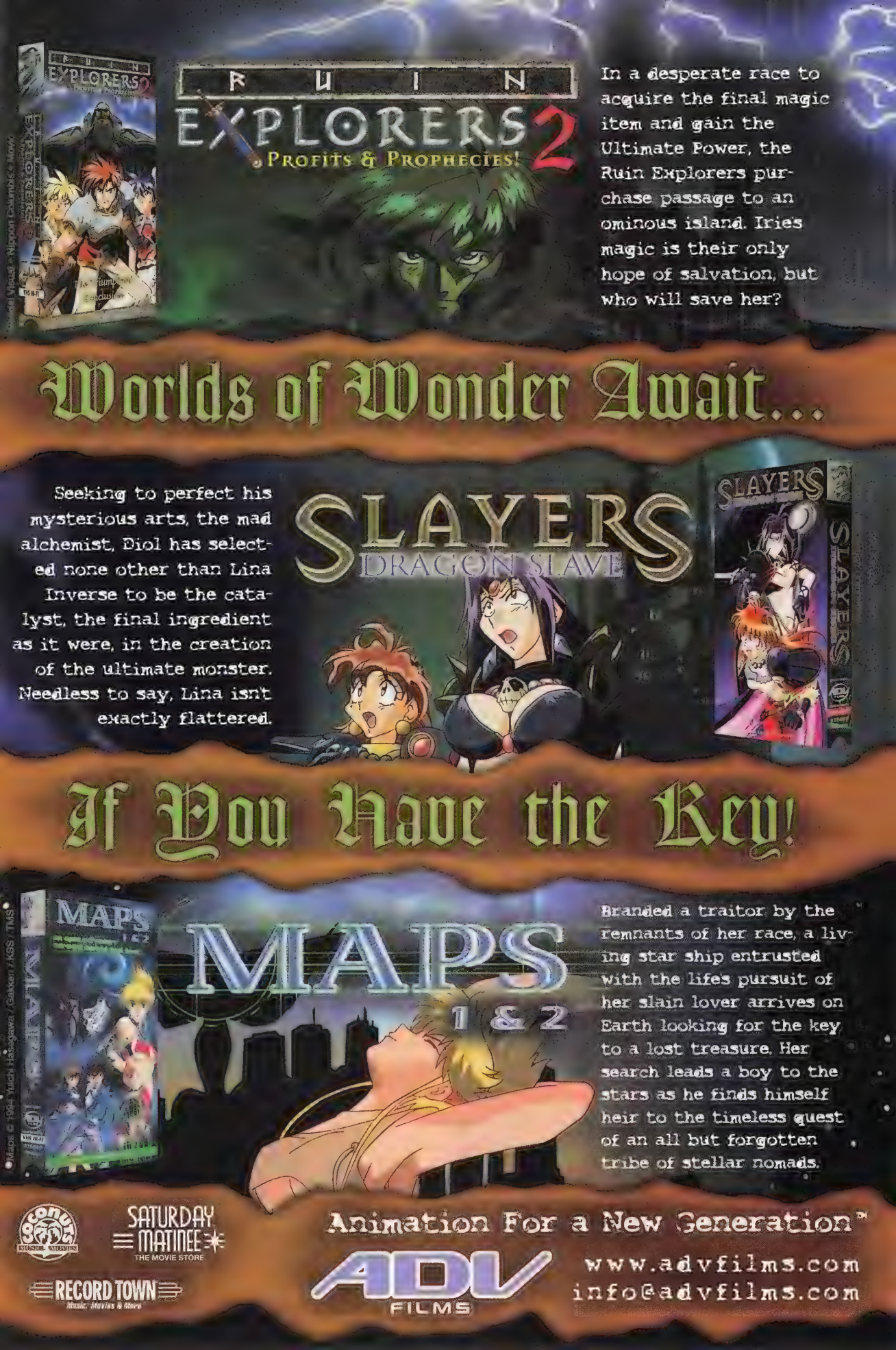
COOL STUFF THROUGH THE MAIL

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

X-MEN #1/2

Holy X-pectorate! Here's your only chance to get the exclusive *X-Men* #1/2 comic featuring your favorite merry mutants in a dragon-filled fantasy world. It's by Todd Dezago and Mike Wieringo! Bamf over to **page 96.**

PHOTOS: PAUL SCHRADER


RUIN EXPLORERS 2
PROFITS & PROPHECIES!
In a desperate race to acquire the final magic item and gain the Ultimate Power, the Ruin Explorers purchase passage to an ominous island. Iries magic is their only hope of salvation, but who will save her?
Worlds of Wonder Await...
Seeking to perfect his mysterious arts, the mad alchemist, Diol has selected none other than Lina Inverse to be the catalyst, the final ingredient as it were, in the creation of the ultimate monster. Needless to say, Lina isn't exactly flattered.
SLAYERS
DRAGON SLAVE
If You Have the Key!
MAPS
1 & 2
Branded a traitor by the remnants of her race, a living star ship entrusted with the life's pursuit of her slain lover arrives on Earth looking for the key to a lost treasure. Her search leads a boy to the stars as he finds himself heir to the timeless quest of an all but forgotten tribe of stellar nomads.
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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

"GOO-GOO-GA-GA" (AND NEXT MONTH, MAYBE THE *BABY* WILL TALK.)

UNEXPECTED PLEASURE

This month I was supposed to start out writing about Halloween, but something incredible just happened to my wife and me. My wife gave birth to our beautiful new baby girl—three-and-a-half weeks early. I made it through the entire delivery without fainting or throwing up. I even cut the umbilical cord. My wife did a tremendous job; thank God for painkillers. Allie Shamus weighs 6 pounds, 11 ounces and came in at 20 inches long. And, of course, she's the cutest baby ever.

And now, Halloween....In *Wizard* every October we produce a Halloween-themed issue, usually with a scary or dark cover and the pictures of the best trick-or-treat costumes around. This year we will not disappoint; the pictures you sent in were amazing, and we definitely had a ton of fun looking at the fantastic costumes. Keep reading and find out who won the contest for 1998.

Also in this month's issue we've got a great interview with two of the scariest guys out there: *Spawn*'s Todd McFarlane and Gene Simmons of KISS. They'll discuss their line of action figures, a new KISS magazine and their business/friendship relationship. Oh, yeah, they'll tip off some double-secret info on the KISS Psycho Circus Tour, which debuts Halloween night in Dodger Stadium.

If that's not enough for you, read what Chaos! Comics' Brian Pulido has planned for Marvel's *Supernaturals* mini-series. Pulido has reinvigorated Marvel's scary boys, including some character redesigns. I'm sure you'll love what he's done.

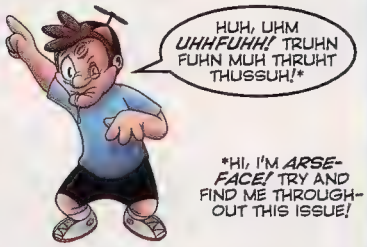
Want more? How about horror comics artist Bernie Wrightson talking about his new take on the Punisher, and the direction his career is headed...and it's *not* in comics. Plus, *Wizard* names the 10 most dangerous supervillains of all time.

And don't forget to look for Li'l Arseface, drawn by Jack Gray. You never know where he'll show up in this issue. Thanks to *Preacher*'s Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon for loaning him to us for this Halloween issue.

Okay, you guys enjoy. I've really gotta go now. I think I hear a baby crying...

See ya!

Gareb



*HI, I'M *ARSE-FACE!* TRY AND FIND ME THROUGH-OUT THIS ISSUE!

P.S. Make sure you sign up for the *Wizard* Visa card, there's an exclusive *Witchblade vs. The Darkness* #1/2 only available by signing up, and lots more exclusives will be available down the road.

MASTHEAD

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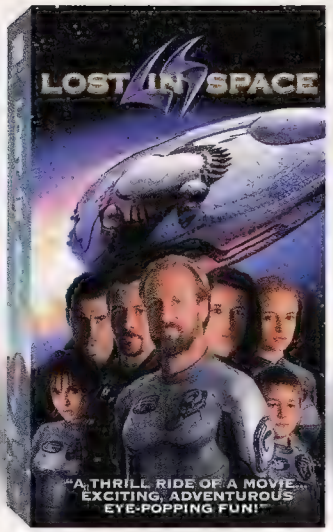

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MAGIC WORDS
THESE LETTERS ARE NOT TO BE USED AS A LIFE-SAVING DEVICE

LINSNER'S LINGERIE... HAL JORDAN'S LOVE CHILD... ...AND LETTERS FROM CHICKS?

Wanna get women all over you? Throw 'em a "Spicy Girls" feature showcasing the most fabulous babe comic book characters. That's what we did in *Wizard* #83, and the chick quotient jumped off the meter! The surprising part? Our average woman-type letter-writer wasn't pissed at our obvious attempt to titillate. In fact, it seems that those of the female persuasion *liked* the article, and many suggested a companion piece. We lead off with such a letter.

Then we get into lingerie. In fact, our letters column this month is a veritable chick-o-rama! We've even got a brief appearance from Cassie Lopusnak, designated estrogen-bearer for the otherwise almost-all boys club we call *Wizard*. Enjoy.

Hey Wizards,

I know *Wizard*'s readership is primarily male, so you need to cater to testosterone sensibilities. And you usually do well at not excluding rabid fangirls like myself. But while I enjoyed the artistry of "Spicy Girls" in *Wizard* #83, I must say the feature left me a bit cold. But here's an idea: My picks for the hottest *male* hotties in all comicdom:

10) Nightcrawler. Agility, charm, chivalry and a German accent equals one desirable freak of nature.

9) Alex Elder. *Crimson*'s Alex is a gothic cutie. Icy blue eyes, midnight hair and more black-buckled leather than Trent Reznor.

8) Chamber. He's tremendously powerful, yet emotionally wounded; sweetly vulnerable and strongly loyal to the team.

7) Flash. From his sense of humor to his well-muscled form, Wally West has got it together. He's handsome and noble.

6) Spider-Man. Did someone say "sense of humor"? Peter Parker is the funniest character in comics! Oh yeah—and he has a great bod.

5) Nightwing. Cute little Robin's all grown up now. Skin-tight spandex works both ways, baby, and Dick's got a physique to show it off.

4) The Darkness. Sure, he's a cold-hearted killer, but would you look at that face?! That hair?! Jackie's a smoothie—with great suits.

3) Gambit. The Cajun accent, the solid body, the unshaven jaw. He's got the power to heat things up with his touch—and I ain't talkin' just cards, gumbo.

2) Lusiphur Malache. This elfin killer exudes sexy malice from every pore in his hunky body.

1) Madman. Besides being "conspicuously anatomically correct," Frank Einstein is the sweetest, silliest, most endearing character in comics. He's good to his girlfriend—and he's got great hair!

Sexiness comes in all shapes and sizes. Genders, too.

Rachael Haring
Blandon, PA

Thanks for the list. You were one of many readers (Not all of whom were female!) who sent in their own "Spicy Guys." But I don't think we'll be doing a feature like this any time in the near future. Chances are those "testosterone sensibilities" would overreact and we'd be faced with a nation of fanboys running around in a blind tizzy, desperately seeking out any and all back issues of *Vampirella*.

And thanks also to Joseph Michael Linsner, whose "Spicy Girls" art you enjoyed. Speaking o' which...

Dear Jim,

A friend of mine just introduced me to Joseph Michael Linsner's *Dawn*. I'm

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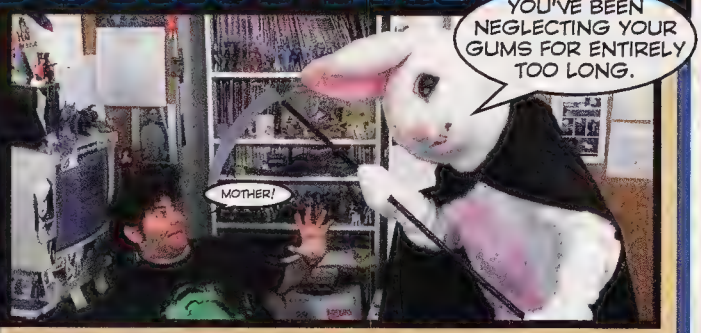
BUNNY AWARD

LETTER OF THE MONTH



Jim takes his favorite letter of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Dear Wizard,

I have found *Batman/Deadman* by James Robinson and John Estes a little masterpiece. Can I know their other works?

I realize my English is rough, but thanks to your magazine I'm learning and improving the knowledge of your language, I hope.

Armando Pandolfo
Latina, Italy

You *can* know their other works. James Robinson is most famous for his 48-issues-and-still-going-strong run writing *Starman* for DC Comics. He also writes *Leave it to Chance* from Homage Comics and did a nifty mini-series for DC back in 1993 called *The Golden Age*.

Painter John Estes hasn't done much in comics. Aside from trading card art, *Batman/Deadman* and a *Tales to Astonish* 1994 one-shot from Marvel is about it.

But I don't know if you *really* want *Wizard* to be your English tutor. It seems to me that the graduate of a "Hooked on Wizphonics" course could tell fart jokes and midget jokes, and talk about monkeys, pie and cheese, but very little else. You might want to try another course of study.

waiting for the day they release a Dawn lingerie line! I'd love to wear some of the stuff she's got. And yes, I am female.

Lori Francz
Eden, NY

Perhaps surprisingly (or perhaps not), Joe Linsner is also waiting for that day. "It's been a dream of mine for many, many years," Joe says. "One day I hope to make it a reality. I have no specific time frame, but it's something I am working toward." God help us, I think he's serious.

Stop the presses! It looks like we've got a new entry for our monthly "Stuff" column!

Dear Wizard,

I'm a big fan of Spider-Man and was wondering if Ralph Macchio, the Spidey editor, is the same Ralph Macchio who starred in the "Karate Kid" movies.

Josh Tilton
picklej@yahoo.com

Y'know, in almost five years of reading letters, I'd swear I've seen this question a thousand times. I will answer this question once and once only, and I'll do it now:

No. Ralph Macchio the editor is not Ralph Macchio the actor. Ralph the editor is much, much older...and much more handsome.

Dear Jim,

I have an intriguing theory about current Green Lantern Kyle Rayner and former GL Hal Jordan:

1) According to *Green Lantern: Heart of Darkness* #1, Kyle Rayner's father was a military man. And Hal Jordan was in the Air Force.

2) Kyle is around 24 years old, right? Hal would have been about 33 when he first got his Green Lantern ring. Add in 10 years between Hal getting the ring and Hal going loopy in *Zero Hour*, and you get a Hal of around 43 years old.

3) Kyle's ring is DNA-specific; it works for him and him alone. But in the recent "Emerald Knights" storyline, Hal and Kyle switched rings and Hal was able to use Kyle's DNA-specific ring.

Due to the fact that Hal used Kyle's ring (maybe they've got very *similar* DNA), and the fact that Hal is old enough to be Kyle's father, *and* the fact that Hal was a military man, *and* the fact that both Hal and Kyle are from California, I conclude...

HAL JORDAN IS KYLE RAYNER'S FATHER!

A wild theory, I'm sure, but there's enough evidence to support it. Isn't there?

Ron Simpson
amerblues@juno.com

Ladies and gentlemen, do we have a winner? "Nah," says *Green Lantern* writer Ron Marz. "Hal being Kyle's dad is way too obvious. We like to *surprise* the *GL* readers. Besides, we glimpsed Kyle's actual father at the end of the Green Lantern/Green Arrow team-up in *Green Arrow* #111 and it wasn't Hal. But don't worry. We've got plans ahead for Kyle's dad."

And I hate to spoil your other theory, but Lee Harvey Oswald did indeed act alone.

Dear Jim,

1) What's the relation between Image, WildStorm, Homage and Cliffhanger?

2) Why do girls always go to the bathroom in herds?

Miguel Williams
New Rochelle, NY

1) WildStorm is a company unto itself that's also part of Image Comics. WildStorm's subdivisions include WildStorm (superhero stuff), Homage (creator-owned titles) and Cliffhanger (a new creator-owned line). All are chock-full of comicy goodness.

2) Cassie Lopusnak, our lovely and talented administrative assistant who—at least according to her job application—is a woman, says, "Men have been struggling for years to try and figure out the complexity of

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, sex and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). The only way to get your Internet address listed instead is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look in the Wizard Bulletin Board, under Message Boards). **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

BUNNY PHOTO: PAUL SCHRADER

women. So in the interest of keeping the female of the species a mystery to males everywhere, I will refrain from comment on the subject and, by doing so, let your imaginations run amok."

Nice try, but it smells like a sham to me. Personally, I think it's 'cause girls are insecure. They need the security of a group. Hey, look at nature. Sheep herd, rams don't. Chickens flock, but roosters strut alone. Same thing here.

Or maybe (*shudder*) they're all talking about us when they're in the ladies' room.

Dear Jim,

I'm a big fan of *WildC.A.T.s* artist Travis Charest and I have some questions about his paint work:

1) What type of paint does he use?

2) What type of brushes?

3) Does he pencil figures in and then paint over them? Or does he go directly to paints?

4) Any painting pointers?

Braden Payne-Chaparro
San Antonio, TX

I'm also a big fan of Travis Charest, who's one of the more monster-talented artists to be found today. Travis says:

1) "I use Aquarelle watercolor pencils. I just add water as I work, and it gives me better control than regular watercolor paint."

2) "No specific brand. Windsor-Newtons are pretty good. They can be picked up at any art store."

3) "I do a pencil drawing first to figure out shadow and shape. Then I use ink wash over that, so the graphite from the pencil won't get smeared. Then I color the black-and-white drawing. Finally, I use white ink for highlight and effects."

4) "Make sure the first thing you try painting isn't important to you, because nine times out of 10, you'll mess it up. Practice a lot before you start on a finished piece."

Hey Jim,

1) What's the name of that guy who painted *Kingdom Come*?

2) What's the name of that guy who does "Happy Little Pictures" on PBS?

Daniel P. Leach
TSC Daniel@aol.com

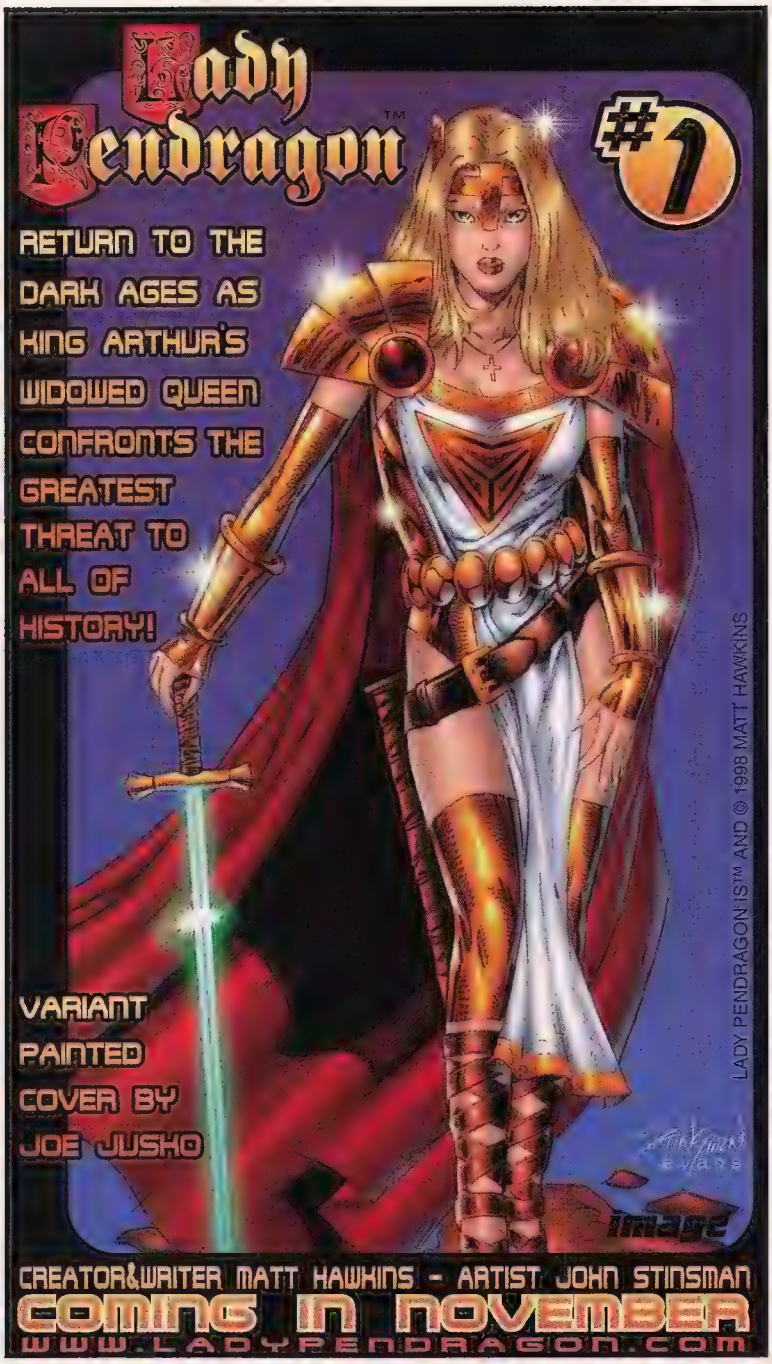
1) Alex Ross.

2) Bob Ross.

No relation.

Dear Jim,

I'm a huge Garth Ennis fan. My mission is to read everything written by him. I own a lot of his comics, but I'd like to know what else might be out there. I already own:



CHRIS ANTEOLA
Age: 15 Sex: Male
1834 Copperfield Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78251-3111
Likes: *Green Lantern*, Top Cow comics, *Creech*

ERIC "SLEIPNIR" DO COUTO
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Age: 13 Sex: Male
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Casa Grande, AZ 85222
Likes: *Spawn*, *Avengers*, *Dragonball Z*

REBECCA FLINT
Age: 18 Sex: Female
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YONG KWOK MING
Age: 16 Sex: Male
Blk 123, Kim Tian Rd., #07-68
Singapore, 160123 (Singapore)
Likes: X-titles, *Spawn*, Cliffhanger

ALLAN JENSEN
Age: 21 Sex: Male
T.H. Hansenvej 8, 1 T.H.
4720 Praestö, Denmark
Likes: X-titles

AARON GRONO
Age: 12 Sex: Male
25110 Itasca Ave.
Forest Lake, MN 55025
Likes: Spider-titles, *Silver Surfer*, drawing comics

Preacher ongoing series and specials, *Hitman*, *Hellblazer*, *The Darkness*, and the *Pride & Joy*, *Goddess*, *Unknown Soldier*, *Medieval Spawn/Witchblade*, *Bloody Mary* and *Dicks* mini-series.

Anything else?

Andriette Langley
Seattle, WA

Yep. Try *True Faith*, an ancient Ennis tale published in Britain in 1990, recently reprinted by DC Comics in 1997 and still in print. Garth also wrote a big hunk o' *Demon* for DC from 1993-1995 (#40, #42-#58), and he'll be doing both an *Enemy Ace* and a *Sgt. Rock* mini-series at DC sometime in 1999 or 2000. And there's always *Punisher Kills the Marvel Universe*, a 1995 "What If?"-style one-shot chock full o' Garthy blood-n-guts goodness.

Dear Wizard,

I just finished *Wizard* #82 and #83 and I've got a problem. The extreme close-ups of Erik Larsen and John Byrne from "Wizard Q&A" are *not* fun to look at. Most people are not very attractive from five inches away. But these full-page close-ups seem to be a *Wizard* staple. I remember when you guys did one on Dave Sim (*Wizard* #58) and I still haven't forgiven you. If you want to do the big photos, at least let the guys wash up, put on some Oxy 10, or even try some makeup.

Or skip it entirely. I don't mind it so much when I can't count every nose hair on Howard Mackie.

Shambus McClure
CMU 51@aol.com

You think it's been bad so far? Wait till we start interviewing characters. Bethcha can't wait for that big Q&A with Arseface.

Dear Jimmy,

How can an ordinary guy like me get a hold of Todd McFarlane?

Kyle Saubert
Lake Zurich, IL

There are many ways. A sleeper hold is always good. Hammer locks also work nicely when you're looking to get a hold of someone. But I'd recommend the step-over toe hold. It's easy to apply to someone, and if they give ya any lip, you can break their ankle from this position. Give it a try and let me know how it went.

Dear Jim,

In the "Picks" section way back in *Wizard* #75, Jeph Loeb said that he and Tim Sale drew up nine different endings for *Batman: The Long Halloween*. Is there any chance that DC will release the other eight versions of #13? If not, could Loeb send me some copies?

And why won't those kids give the rabbit some Trix? I mean, he's on the freaking box! If I were that rabbit, I'd bash those stupid kids' heads in!

Nathan Carroll
Dillsburg, PA

Loeb said DC probably won't and he definitely won't. But he did give us the Top Eight Reasons Why the Alternate *Batman: The Long Halloween* Endings Will Never See The Light Of Day! Take it away, Jeph!

8) "They're all better than the one we used, which would make the hardcover (unabashed plug)—on sale in October, 380 pages for $29.95—look bad."

7) "They were all drawn by Frank Miller, who now draws exactly like Tim Sale."

6) "There were actually 16 endings, and publishing only eight wouldn't be fair to the others."

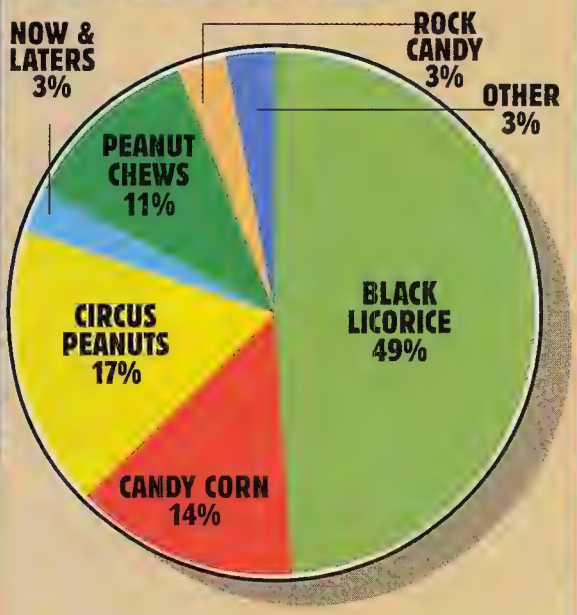
5) "DC plans on having a different ending every 10 years for the anniversaries."

4) "They are now the endings for (unabashed plug) *Superman For All Seasons*."

SURVEY SAYS

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

WHAT IS THE CRAPPIEST HALLOWEEN CANDY?



We all know Halloween rules! But sometimes the *candy* sucks. Yeah, it always sucked when the lady down the street dished out pennies, but we were looking more specifically at *candy*. So when you look in that bag and see all that crappy stuff, what's the first foodstuff you dish out to your little sister?

Black licorice is da' winnah. Three fans summed up the black licorice experience perfectly:

- **"Whoever eats black licorice, eats tires."**
- **"Black licorice is the devil candy and is a vile, vomit-like substance."**
- **"I think only 1 percent of the population likes black licorice and black jellybeans and, unfortunately, they rule the world right now."** ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

NATHAN SCHOENFELDT
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FOXGLOVE
Age 17 Sex Female
15633 Penn
Livonia MI 48154
Likes: *Uncanny X-Men*, *The Coven*, *The Darkness*

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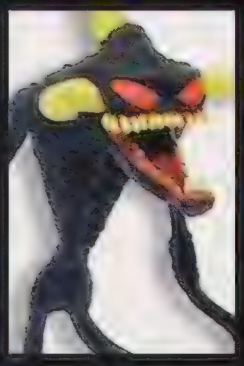

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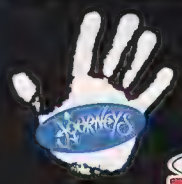

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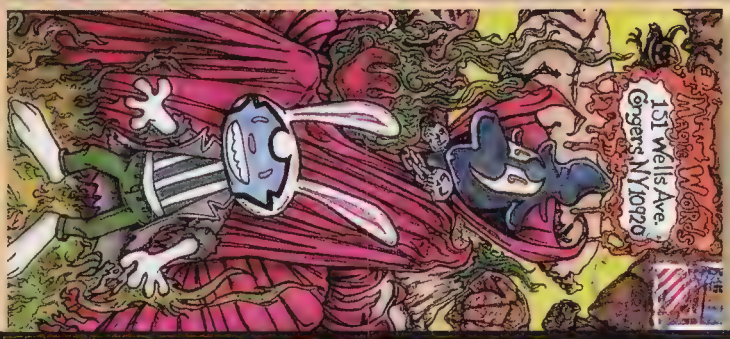
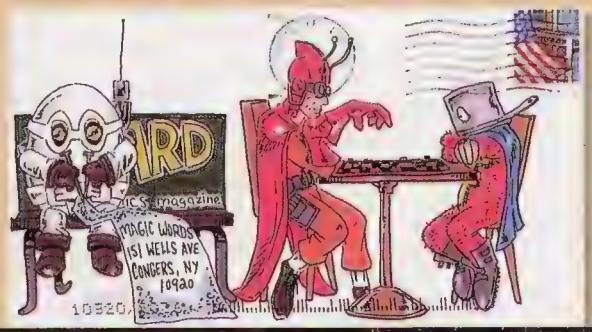
ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE

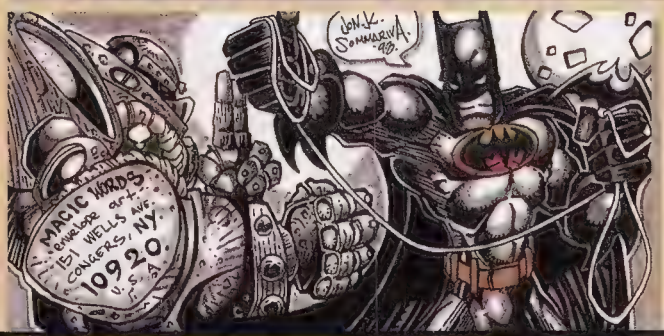
POPEYE AS THOR Jaimz Lucero Boise, ID



SAM AND MAX Tony E. Lawson South Point, OH



NEW HEROES FOR HIRE Jonathan Higdon Sulphur, LA



BATMAN VS. CALIBRETTO Jon Sommariva Australia

3) "I left them in my other pants."

2) "We sent them to *Wizard* and Jim McLauchlin ate them."

1) "What do you think we were using for the sequel?"

Often imitated, never duplicated, occasionally constipated, he is: The one and only Jeph Loeb.

And according to Becky, an informative and friendly customer service representative at Trix manufacturer General Mills, the Trix rabbit *has* gotten Trix several times! "We've had elections where the kids can write or call in to vote on whether the rabbit should get some Trix, and he always wins," Becky says. But the oppressive totalitarian breakfast regime always goes back to the status quo. Becky says it's "just due to an advertising campaign that's been in place for many years," but we know better: The Man is tryin' to keep the rabbit down.

And for the record, the *Wizard* Bunny gets all the damn Trix he wants. No questions asked.

Dear Wizard,

I completely understand why "you don't tug on Superman's cape." It's self-explanatory why "you don't spit in the wind." I can even respect why "you don't pull the mask off the ol' Lone Ranger." But why, pray tell, is it that "you don't mess around with Jim"?

J. Patrick Landers
Dandridge, TN

'Cause I'm down with the Bunny. And if you do mess, I'll sic him on your lame ass. Believe me—you don't wanna mess with six feet of furry fury! He'll show you new places to hide Easter eggs.

Ah, it's good to have friends in high (and occasionally violent) places. Until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin is tired of writing these taglines because he knows you don't read 'em anyway.

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JANUARY
1999

IT'S A STRANGE WORLD. LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY.

IT'S A STRANGE WORLD. LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY.

WILDSTORM

PLANETARY™
number 1

WARREN ELLIS

JOHN CASSADAY

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TODD RESHUFFLES COMIC LINE IN 1999

'Curse of Spawn' to focus on Sam and Twitch; 'The Crow' flies to TMP

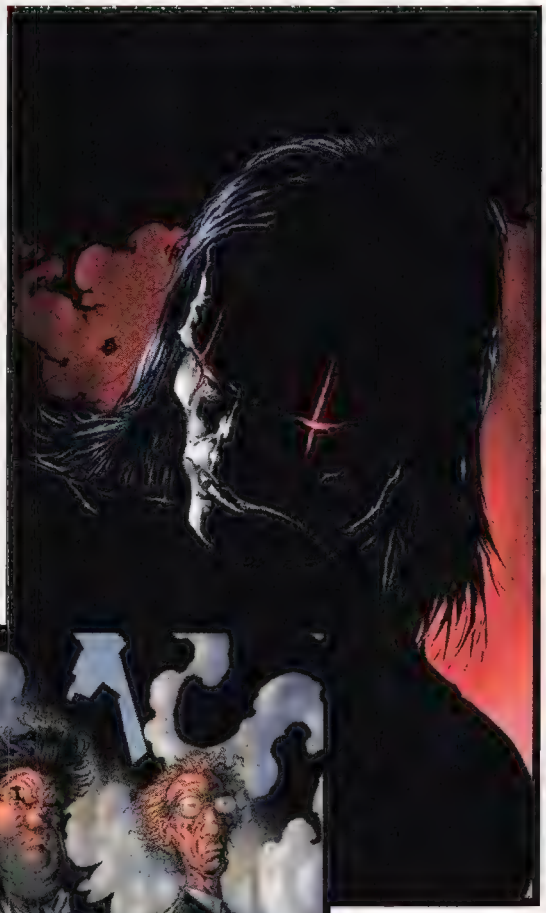
A new year will bring changes to Todd McFarlane Productions, as the popular *Spawn* and *KISS: The Psycho Circus* publisher plans fresh projects and a major change in the existing line. "Todd's always done opposite of what's expected," TMP Marketing Director Beau Smith said. "Everyone else is cutting back. Todd says now's the time to expand."

A number of moves are planned for first quarter, 1999, including:

Curse of the Spawn

"By volume of mail," Smith said, "we've found that what people really like in *Curse of the Spawn* is the cop-and-mob stuff, the urban horror. So we're going to focus on Sam and Twitch."

Sam and Twitch are the police detectives who often appear in the popular *Spawn* spinoff. And soon, the title will reflect their popularity. "We'll have a new #1 in early '99, probably called *Sam and Twitch: The Curse of Spawn*," Smith said. "It'll be an 'ugly X-Files' book, with the boys going up against sick, twisted criminals like you saw in the movie 'Seven.' It'll focus on monsters, but they'll all be the human monster."



The creative team of writer Alan McElroy and penciler Dwayne Turner will remain the same with the relaunch, although *Black Terror*'s Clayton Crane will fill in for as few issues when Turner gives *Spawn* penciler Greg Capullo a break for a few issues.

The Crow

James O'Barr's *The Crow* is taking wing and moving to McFarlane, where Smith said it will become a monthly full-color comic focusing on the Crow as seen in two movies and a current TV series. (Kitchen Sink Press will continue to do black-and-white *Crow* comics.) "And James gets approval over everything, and as much input as he wants," Smith said. O'Barr will still write and pencil occasional annuals and mini-series supplemental to the regular monthly, scheduled to be written by Jon J Muth (*Moonshadow*). Rotating artists will handle what Smith terms "easy jumping-on stories. Most stories will be one-issue stand-alones. We might have occasional two-parters."

Ozzy Osbourne

Having seen the success of *KISS: The Psycho*

McFAR-LAND Todd McFarlane Productions has big plans for the Crow (above) and *Spawn* detectives Sam and Twitch (left).

Circus, McFarlane is now dipping his feet into the Ozzy pool. The British madman/rock star will be the focus of a January one-shot magazine featuring a comic story by writer Paul Jenkins (*Inhumans*) and artist Dean Ormston (*Predator: Captive*). The mag will include Ozzy articles and photos, but Jenkins maintained the comic is the main attraction. "You don't need to create a character for Ozzy," Jenkins said. "He already is one. We set him up as a raving nutter, a complete loon who loves pushing other people's buttons. He's a madman who enjoys getting everyone riled up."

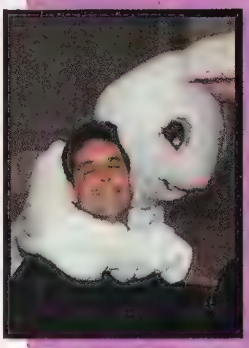
Smith said if sales are strong enough on the one-shot, an ongoing Ozzy mag—with comic content—will result.

Black Terror

The Black Terror, one of the characters TMP bought in the Eclipse Books bankruptcy, will see life as an ongoing monthly in early 1999. Smith will write, and newcomer Crane will pencil a book Smith said "is being pushed into movies, TV or whatever—something we're doing with all TMP properties."

The Black Terror is a secret U.S. government agent in a world in which politics and organized crime go hand-in-hand. In the first story arc, the Terror is assigned to protect the president, but finds he just may have to assassinate him when it's discovered that the prez is owned by the mob. "It reads like a movie put to print," Smith said. "It's a real political intrigue thriller."

And the future? McFarlane is not standing pat. "Early 1999 is going to be a very, very big time for us," Smith said. "And by late in the year, we're talking about some possible joint ventures with Marvel, DC and Dark Horse. Todd ain't gonna let us rest much next year." ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN



Over-imaginative creator Todd McFarlane arrested at local signing: "Hey...who wants to pet my fluffy bunny?" the arguably nuts Canadian asked shocked fans before being beaten and deported.

REVOLVING GREEN LANTERN DOOR SENDS KYLE PACKIN'

'GREEN' ACRES Green Lantern Kyle Rayner is off to the stars to create a new Green Lantern Corps.

Now that Silver Age Green Lantern Hal Jordan has returned to the past after a controversial guest shot in *Green Lantern*, you'd think the life of current Lantern Kyle Rayner would get back to normal, right? Hardly.

"When Hal returns to the past at the end of *Green Lantern* #106," writer Ron Marz said, "he leaves a ring in the present. Kyle learns Hal's ring is different. It can make copies of itself. So Kyle gets it into his head to go into space and restart the Green Lantern Corps."

Before Kyle heads out, he realizes he can't leave Earth unguarded, so he looks for a replacement GL. Kyle's girlfriend, Jade, takes the job. Donning a replica of the original Hal Jordan costume, she becomes a Green Lantern in Kyle's absence.

Kyle's space adventure is then told in a separate two-issue mini-series by Chuck Dixon and Scott Eaton. As Dixon explains it, "Kyle will be in an unexplored region of DC space where he runs afoul of an intergalactic police force. It'll be a learning experience for Kyle, and it will also explain why choosing Green Lanterns was best left to the wise old Guardians."

Meanwhile, on Earth, Jade adjusts to being a Green Lantern admirably, teaming up with Wonder Woman (#108) and Green Arrow (#110). Issue #111 guest stars Jade's dad, Alan Scott (the original, Golden Age Green Lantern), and promises to set a new status quo for Alan.

Kyle? He returns in #111 to find that the mortal enemy of GLs everywhere, Fatality, has returned to the book as well. So does Kyle come back with a whole new Corps? Or with his tail between his legs? "We'll all just have to wait and see," Marz said. ■ MATTHEW BRADY

Dark Lord of the Sith gypped by area vending machine. "Dammit! That was my last dollar!" the corrupt Jedi was heard swearing before violently shaking the machine and crushing the larynx of a nearby captain.

Evil Beanie Baby kills four, wounds five others. "He was always so quiet and polite," fellow Beanie Bongo the monkey told reporters, "but when he learned he was being retired, he just went &%#@ing nuts."

PHOTOS: PAUL SCHIRALDI

TOP COW TAPS LARA CROFT AGAIN

Mix video game leading lady with comics' hottest heroine. Add a super-popular comic artist and what do you have? *Tomb Raider/Witchblade II* by Michael Turner.

Witchblade co-creator Turner will draw and co-write a new Tomb Raider/Witchblade crossover scheduled to hit in December. Joining Turner for this 22-page project will be his *Fathom* writing partner, Bill O'Neil. But unlike the previous 1997 *Tomb Raider/Witchblade* comic which was only available through exclusive mail-away offers, *II* will be available through comic stores. "The first *Tomb Raider/Witchblade* story had to introduce the characters and get them together," Turner said. "But now, we can jump right in, and there'll be more time for action."

Publisher Top Cow Productions has also announced *Tomb Raider/Witchblade II* will lead into an upcoming three-part *Tales of the Witchblade* story which Turner will write. "Part of the things developed in Egypt, where the story takes place, will carry over into my *Tales* trilogy early next year," Turner said.

In addition, negotiations centering around whether or not the comic will tie into the storyline of the *Tomb Raider III* video game (scheduled for November release) are still taking place.

And what about a third Lara Croft/Witchblade meeting? "I'd love to do one if they do a *Tomb Raider IV* video game," Turner said. ■ MATTHEW SENREICH

GIRL POWER! Lovely lasses Lara Croft (above left) and Sara Pezzini oppose gun control in the upcoming *Tomb Raider/Witchblade II* crossover.

THE BUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

TOY BIZ CLEANS THE HOUSE OF IDEAS? Looks like Toy Biz (the toy company that Marvel *used* to own) is now *this* close to finalizing a deal to buy Marvel. But word on the drum is that Toy Biz may put in place new minimum-sales guidelines which could cancel several marginal-selling Marvel titles. We'll keep you posted.

'UNCANNY' ARTIST! Didja see *X-Men* #80 yet? If you did, you noticed the talents of penciler Brandon Peterson (*Arcanum*) on the X-people. Marvel, of course, has seen it. And it likes it. It just may make a regular home for Brando somewhere in the X-universe in 1999.

BATGIRL RETURNS? A rumor out of DC says that a female Bat-character with the word "girl" in her name will be introduced in 1999's "No Man's Land" storyline. Also, Harley Quinn fans, rejoice! Batman animated producer Paul Dini confirmed he will write the character into the mainstream Batman comics in 1999 with a look and origin similar to the cartoon version.

HOT TALENT AT WILDSTORM! It looks like 1999 may see a new *Majestic* ongoing featuring the WildC.A.T.s character by a batch of young movers-and-shakers: writers Joe Casey (*Cable*) and Brian Holguin (*KISS: The Psycho Circus*) and penciler Ed McGuinness (*Deadpool*).

BIZ IS BACK! DC is tryin' hard to get over-the-top painter (and famed Lobo artist) Simon Bisley back in the fold. If all works well, look for a Biz-painted Lobo one-shot in early 1999, possibly co-starring Batman.

CASEY

NEW 'DAWN' RISING! Fans of Joseph Michael Linsner, fear not! Next year marks the 10th anniversary of Dawn, and Linsner is planning a spankin'-new *Dawn* series, tentatively scheduled for April of '99.

DARROW RETURNS! Hyper-detailed artist Geof Darrow (*Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot*) is hard at work on his next project, which will focus on...kung-fu cowboys and giant monsters? Look for it in late 1999, published by Dark Horse.

AND CASTELLINI RETURNS! Another super-talented artist, Claudio Castellini (*Marvel vs. DC*) is reportedly groovin' on a Batman graphic novel written by Ron Marz (*Green Lantern*). Expect it to see print by late '99.

CASEY PHOTO BY ROBERT BECK

OFFICIAL MARVEL HANDBOOK IS BACK!

Need to find Fin Fang Foom's first appearance? Maybe Captain America's shoe size? Fear not, True Believer! Help is on the way with *The Official Marvel Handbook*.

"It's just time to do it," Tom Brevoort, the *Handbook*'s editor said. Brevoort will oversee production of this ultimate Marvel encyclopedia and said, "The last one we did ended in 1994 and so much has changed since then." Brevoort has dispatched Marvel über-historian Peter Sanderson, writer for previous Marvel *Handbooks*, to pen the new volume, which will contain full-page and multi-page encyclopedia-style write-ups of Marvel characters.

"It'll take two years of monthly issues just to get through all the living characters," Brevoort said. And big issues they are: 64-page whoppers which debut monthly in early 1999. No cover price has been set yet, although artists are getting on board. Brevoort said former *X-Men* artist Carlos Pacheco "is a big Marvel history buff. He'll be drawing a few of his favorites." ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

we looked it up

WHO? WHERE? WHY?

DE•MAT•TEIS (deh MATT tiss), John Marc (common use: J.M.); proper noun. 1953-present; **1** Comic writer currently working on *Webspinners: Tales of Spider-Man* and an upcoming *Sub-Mariner* one-shot **2** former writer of *Silver Surfer* and the critically acclaimed *Moonshadow*; also a former music journalist with extensive *Rolling Stone* credits **3** Merchandise for sale at "Toothless Louie's Discount Bedding" stores

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH WOLVIE?

For the first time in a year, December will see a regular creative team on *Wolverine*—writer Erik Larsen and penciler Jeff Matsuda. So will we finally get long-awaited answers to questions about the ol' Canucklehead? Larsen and *Wolverine* Editor Mark Powers let us know:

1) WILL WOLVIE GET THE ADAMANTIUM BACK?

Erik Larsen: "It's my intention to make this happen. Everybody seems to want this. The big question is whether the powers-that-be will let me."

Mark Powers-that-be: "He will. But it's nothing we can talk about yet. I'm on radio silence on this one."

2) HOW 'BOUT SABRETOOTH? WILL HIS SKELETON STILL BE ADAMANTIUM-LACED?

Larsen: "I see no good reason to undo this."

Powers: "He'll still have adamantium. He's a totally more dangerous villain with it."

3) WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH VIPER? WILL SHE AND WOLVIE STILL BE MARRIED?

Larsen: "That's the idea. I'm sure I'll have to deal with this at some point, but they'll still be married when I'm handed the book."

Powers: "They definitely hate each other. But their marriage will remain...for at least a few more months."

4) WILL ANY OF WOLVIE'S OH-SO-MYSTERIOUS PAST BE REVEALED?

Larsen: "Given the mess we've seen thus far, I'm not inclined to add to it. To me, Wolverine was more interesting with a mysterious past. Now that it's been partially touched on in the most convoluted fashion imaginable, I can't say it's been improved. I'd rather work toward giving Wolverine a cool present than monkey with his past."

Powers: "I think we've revealed more than enough. Whatever is left as a mystery, I want to keep that way."

5) WHAT KINDA VILLAINS WILL BE PLAGUING WOLVIE?

Larsen: "Fewer generic tough guys and more mainstream Marvel powerhouses. Blastaar, the Rhino and Modok are all cool.

In his quest to get back his adamantium, I'd like to bring in other Marvel villains who have adamantium stuff—like Dr. Octopus or the Constrictor. Don't expect Wolverine spending time in Madripoor dealing with generic ninjas. Those days are over."

Powers: "Erik loves the Marvel Universe. He's gonna bring in a lot of mainline guys. He even wants to use Galactus—we're not sure if we're gonna do that yet. But I'm encouraging him to create new villains also.

■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

ADAMANTIUM? A-OKAY! New *Wolverine* writer Erik Larsen says he's the man with the plan to bring back Wolverine's adamantium–if he can.

Somewhere around the corner, just beyond the edge of perception, lies a world you've never dreamed existed...

from

brian HOLGUIN jay ANACLETO

Image

special preview book in November

ARIA

ARIA IS TRADEMARK AND COPYRIGHT HOLGUIN, HABERLIN, PORTACIO 1998

NEWS&NOTES

ABACULUS
October's *Love Bomb* premieres the alien Swill and his introduction to beer and cigarettes.

ACCLAIM PUBLISHING
In November, writer Shon Bury and artist Joe St. Pierre present *Nio*, a four-issue mini-series exploring a future struggle between man and machine.

ALTERNATIVE PRESS
Slowpoke #1 debuts in November, picking up where the daily college comic strips left off.

AWESOME-HYPERWERKS
As the header above might tell ya, **Awesome** and Hyperwerks have merged. In November, *Youngblood* #3 continues the hit super-team series by writer **Alan Moore** and penciler Steve Skroce.

CARTOON BOOKS
Gran'ma's back with a new look and we all get to read the conclusion to the five-part stupid, stupid rat creature back-up in November's *Bone* #35.

CHAOS! COMICS
Writer David Quinn and Lady Death co-creator **Steven Hughes** pit the Lady against Lucifer in November's *Lady Death* #11.

CHECKER COMICS
Neal Adams contributes his talents to the cover of *Danger Ranger* #3 in November.

CLAYPOOL COMICS
Elvira, Mistress of the Dark #67 lampoons "Star Trek"! The scream queen auditions for a chance to play an alien chick!

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
A second T-shirt for 1998 hits in October, this one featuring Shannon Wheeler's **Too Much Coffee Man**. Mail donations to fight censorship to CBLDF, P.O. Box 693, Northampton, MA 01061.

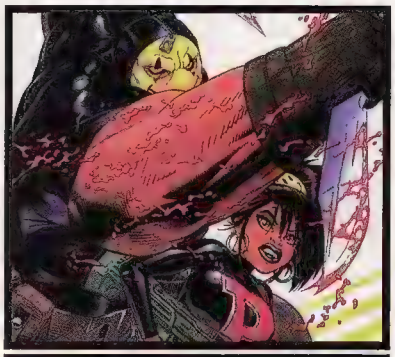
cont'd →

'BODY BAGS,' PART DEUX

Suffering from a shortage of violence in your comic diet? Fear not! Creator Jason Pearson is hard at work on a follow-up mini-series to his 1996 sleeper hit *Body Bags*.

Pearson has begun story development for the further adventures of father-and-daughter contract killers Clownface and Panda. For the sequel, Pearson—who plans to write, pencil, ink and color the project—promises plenty of blood and guts...but also more character interaction. "It will show more of the world that they live in, the social factors involved when you're dealing with a pair of super-assassins."

But Pearson, who expects the series to hit stands in 1999, is hesitant to describe the first *Body Bags* run—a huge back-issue success—as a hit. "It didn't sell high numbers. It wasn't a success except that it showed potential. Hopefully this one will really prove worthwhile." ■ **SCOTT A. AUBREY**



TAGGED AND BAGGED Expect a high body count in the sequel to *Body Bags*.

CAP-MANIA EXPLODES IN FALL ONE-SHOTS

July 4th? Feh! It looks like Captain America is choosing November to celebrate with three special one-shots from Marvel, each exploring Cap's relationship with a featured character.

Marvel Annual '98: Captain America & Iron Man will be written by the team of Kurt Busiek, Roger Stern and Mark Waid. Patrick Zircher (*Iron Man: The Iron Age*) provides art. The book features the duo tackling the nefarious forces of A.I.M. But the true story lies in the philosophical differences between the idealist—Cap—and the industrialist, Iron Man.

"Tension comes from their personal beliefs on how to handle the situation," editor Matt Idelson said.

Meanwhile, Busiek and Karl Kesel will co-write the *Captain America & Citizen V* annual with Mark Bagley (*Thunderbolts*) penciling. Cap and longtime nemesis Baron Zemo will square off against each other for the first time since Cap's return from "Heroes Reborn" in 1997. "And you'll also get the first big and surprising clue about who the new Citizen V is," editor Tom Brevoort said.

Chuck Dixon will write and Anthony Williams (*Squadron Supreme*) will draw the 48-page *Captain America/Red Skull* bookshelf. The Skull, left in a "shadow state" after being blasted into a wall in *Captain America* (vol. 1) #448, is returning to the Marvel Universe. "A lot of the story takes place in a world of the Skull's own making," Dixon said, "full of his memories and hallucinations. But the book'll end with a mysterious shadow figure returning him to our world as the full-blooded, full-bodied Red Skull." ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

DIAL "P" FOR PATRIOT New energy shield in hand, Captain America will co-star in three different books with Iron Man, Citizen V and the Red Skull in November.

X-WRITERS QUIT

Kelly, Seagle out; Alan Davis jumps on both X-Men titles

The X-Men are seeing more than just a roster change this winter. X-Men writers Joe Kelly and Steven T. Seagle have tendered their resignations on *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men* respectively.

Kelly expects his last issue to be December's *X-Men* #85 while Seagle also departs that month with *Uncanny X-Men* #365. The writing pair cited creative differences with the X-Men editors concerning the upcoming X-crossover scheduled for early 1999. Alan Davis (*JLA: The Nail*), who will pencil *X-Men* with issue #85, will take over writing plots for both *X-Men* and *Uncanny* in January. Whether Davis will script the books is still to be determined. "Alan will orchestrate the X-crossover involving Magneto and he'll work through at least the first quarter of 1999," Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras said. "Steve and Joe did a great job on the books, but they were looking at different places to go than we wanted. We're all still buds, but change is the essence of the X-Men and this is another change."

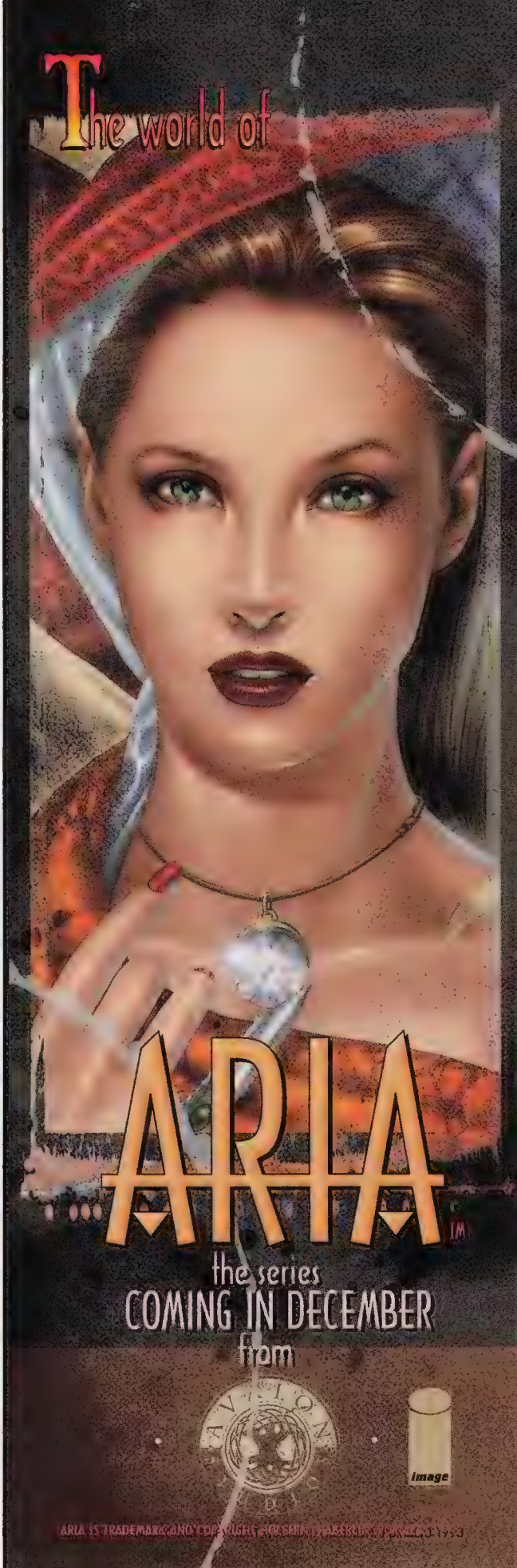
Kelly and Seagle agree the direction of the winter storyline was the reason for their departure. "[The X-office] wanted a certain type of writer that we weren't," Kelly said. "We didn't feel that our input was listened to enough, so we decided to go in separate directions. But it was a totally friendly break and fans should know that."

"I'm a little disappointed because Joe and I could have made a major mark on the X-Men, but the way the work process went, that was not going to happen," Seagle said.

Kelly will continue to write *Deadpool* and an upcoming *Webspinners* storyline early next year. Meanwhile, Seagle will begin work on a new Vertigo title *Big World* with Mike Allred and an X-Men graphic novel with Brent Anderson. A time frame for both projects has yet to be determined. "We're also talking to both Joe and Steve about doing other ongoing projects at Marvel," Harras said. "But all of that is still in negotiation." ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

EX-MEN With Kelly (left) and Seagle off the X-books, former *Excalibur* writer/artist Alan Davis will take over into the first quarter of 1999.



COPPERVALE PRESS
October's *Starchild: Mythopolis* #5 is reformatting to a 16-page one-shot for just a buck, titled *Starchild: TwoPenny Serenade*.

DARK HORSE COMICS
Bob Burden's quirky **Flaming Carrot** stars in *Flaming Carrot Volume 4–Fortune Favors the Bold*. It's scheduled for a November release.

DC COMICS
Paul Chadwick (*Concrete*) and painter John Bolton collaborate on *Gifts of the Night*, a 1999 Vertigo series.

DREAMSMITH STUDIOS
Book #5 features covers by new regular cover artist **Brandon Peterson** (*Arcanum*) and an alternate by Ed McGuinness (*Deadpool*).

EVENT COMICS
November sees *Painkiller Jane* #0, telling the full origin of Jane with art by **Amanda Conner** (*Vampirella*).

FIREMAN PRESS
Doug TenNapel, creator of "**Earthworm Jim**," launches a new, wacky, six-issue mini-series titled *Gear* that centers around four cats on a mission to destroy a giant killer robot!

FULL BLEED STUDIOS
Every major **Pitt** villain gets spotlighted in *Pitt Crew* #2.

HARRIS COMICS
It's winner-take-all action when **Vampirella** (in new battle armor) fights her nemesis Mistress Nyx in November's *Vampirella: Hell on Earth* #3, which also serves as issue #12 of the *Vampirella* monthly.

IMAGE COMICS
November sees *Gazillion* #1, the tale of a war between humans and the alien Dermul. *Lady Pendragon* tells an alternate version of Arthurian myth starting in November.

LADY PENDRAGON

• **AVALON STUDIOS**
The *Aria Preview* is your first look at Avalon's new series drawn by talented newcomer **Jay Anacleto**. Look for it in November.

• **HIGHBROW**
Savage Dragon's Greatest Team-Ups is a November trade paperback featuring just what the title would imply. The art is by Erik Larsen, Jim Lee, **Joe Madureira** and others.

• **TOP COW COMICS**
November's *The Darkness* #20 features a one-in-four variant cover by Darkness co-creator **Marc Silvestri**.

cont'd →

FIVE YEARS LATER, DR. MID-NITE REAPPEARS

It took five years to produce, but DC Comics' new version of the Golden Age hero Dr. Mid-Nite will finally be seen in December as a three-issue mini-series by Matt Wagner (*Mage*) and painter John K. Snyder III.

"I think of it this way," Wagner said, "production-wise, *Dr. Mid-Nite* had a chronic illness, but it's had a speedy recovery." Wagner and Snyder have updated Mid-Nite, who died in DC's 1994 continuity-revamping crossover, *Zero Hour*. The new doctor, Pieter Cross, will be fighting corruption in Portsmouth, a city overrun by over-development.

AFTER 'MID-NITE': Dr. Mid-Nite is back and he might appear in the new JSA.

As the story begins, Cross is a street-level doctor more concerned with the act of healing than the business of it. "He's always been a bit of a rebel," Wagner said. "Everything he does is just left of the medical establishment. We're trying to play up that he was already a hero long before an accident blinds him." As Dr. Mid-Nite (who can only see in the dark with special goggles), Cross tangles with the Terrible Trio, a group of scheming industrialists.

So what held up *Dr. Mid-Nite*? Snyder takes the blame. "As the story goes and you see Dr. Mid-Nite develop into a superhero, you see me develop into a better painter," he said. Snyder used every painting technique he learned over the last five years for the project. Acrylic paints, airbrush and color pencils were just a few of the things he experimented with.

And DC is getting a bit experimental, also. Once planned as an out-of-continuity "Elseworlds" tale, *Dr. Mid-Nite* is now in continuity, and the character may appear again as part of a rumored Justice Society of America revamp. ■ **CHRIS HUTCHINS**

THUMBING OFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

'BLADE': Finally, a good Marvel movie! "Blade" was an action-packed romp filled with martial arts battles second only to Jackie Chan films. Heck, it's the best comic flick since "The Crow." Makes us long for those delayed Spider-Man and Hulk flicks...

JLA'S STARRO: Who'dathunk a giant, evil alien starfish could be exciting? Hats off to Team JLA in *JLA* #21 for transforming a hokey old DC baddie into a horrific, mind-controlling conqueror the size of Greenland.

FRANK MILLER'S '300': Who sez comics'll rot your brain? Just read *300*, which melds real history with dramatic license, recounting the battle at Thermopylae where 300 Spartans held off the massive Persian army. *300* is the "Braveheart" of comics!

THUMBS DOWN

CAP'S NEW SHIELD: When Cap first lost his traditional shield, he got a museum replica of the triangle shield. Now, he's using a Power Ranger-gimmick energy shield? Neither of which he can throw? And this new one's just a cheap Power Rangers gimmick. We hope there's some sort of payoff to this plot, 'cause so far it's pretty lame.

NEW VAMPI COSTUME: If it ain't broke, why fix it? The biggest thing Vampirella had going for her was costume recognition. She's supposed to be sexy, not a leather-toting warrior.

'DIVINE RIGHT': Jim Lee excited fans with the promise of a monthly book *Divine Right*. Hey, great, but where's the monthly book? Issue #5 was the last issue seen...and that had a February cover date. Patience is a virtue, but this is ridiculous! (See story, next page.)

LEE CONSIDERS SHORTENING 'DIVINE RIGHT' SERIES

So what happened to Jim Lee's *Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday*?

Lee's monthly creator-owned project debuted among the top 20 best-selling comics in September, 1997, and has seen sales steadily increase since then. But the book has seen gaps in its publishing schedule as long as four months. What's the holdup? And will there be further *Divine Right* droughts?

"The book is not canceled," an adamant Lee said. "Things have come up this year which prevented my concentrating on the book. Ultimately, my future will be a once-every-six-weeks schedule, due to my business responsibilities at WildStorm as owner."

Lee is also considering shortening the story from its planned run of 20-25 issues to somewhere between 10 and 15.

"Every time the book was late and another month went by, I felt like crap," Lee said. "I know that we have a loyal core who look forward to the book, and I look forward to telling the stories. I have scenes I can't wait to draw! I'm still very much into the book."

'DIVINE' WRONG! Don't bury Jim Lee's *Divine Right* just yet. The series is still being published and will be the focal point for a major crossover.

So much so that *Divine Right* is the focal point for an upcoming WildStorm Universe crossover tentatively scheduled for mid-1999 that will pit all WildStorm characters—from Gen[13] to the WildC.A.T.s—with or against *Divine Right* star Max Faraday.

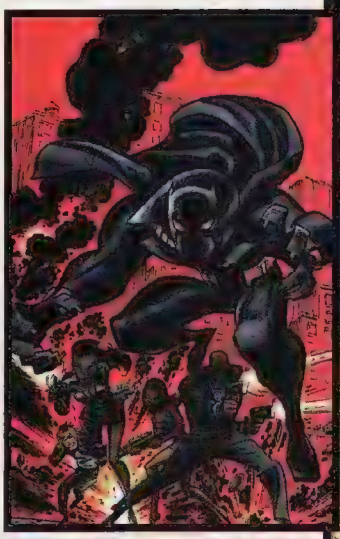
And Lee is already discussing his next project for late 1999 with former *Uncanny X-Men*—and now *WildC.A.T.s*— writer Scott Lobdell. Though no story details are available yet, their project is tentatively titled *Three*. Lee and Lobdell are also considering a publishing format that would resemble Japanese manga—paperback-sized, with additional pages. "This way we can publish 40-50 pages a month and get new talent to do different things," Lee said. "Then again, it may just be a regular 22-page book." ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

NEW ARTISTS ENTER MARVEL UNDER COVER OF KNIGHT

Since when does J. Scott Campbell work for Marvel? Since Jimmy Palmiotti and Joe Quesada started "Marvel Knights."

Knights, the recently launched branch of Marvel dedicated to breathing life into old Marvel mainstays, is bringing new artists to Marvel's "Two for Two" program. The program offers two different covers on all #2 issues, and October's Knights #2's feature big names: *Danger Girl* artist Campbell will tackle *Daredevil*'s cover, "Batman/Superman Adventures" Producer Bruce Timm is on the front of *Black Panther* and the hyper-detailed art of Geof Darrow (*Hard Boiled*) will grace *Inhumans* cover.

"We want to give Marvel fans something they don't see every day," Knights Editor Joe Quesada said of the just-Knighted Marvel guys. "We're fans of these guys, and they're fans of the characters. We want to be as open as possible." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**



TAKE TWO Timm's *Black Panther* #2 cover (above) and Campbell's *Daredevil* #2 (right).

KITCHEN SINK PRESS
The team of **Joe Lansdale** (*Jonah Hex*) and artist John Lucas (*Starman*) guides the fate of the crime-busting Spirit in November's *The Spirit: The New Adventures* #8.

MARVEL COMICS
Silver Surfer penciler Jon J Muth is joined by his mother-in-law (No kidding!) and new ongoing writer **Louise Simonson** (*Superman: The Man of Steel*) with October's #147.

MIGHTY GREMLIN
November sees the debut of ***Electric Girl*** which features the young girl Virginia and her best friend/gremlin Oogleeoog.

MIDNIGHT COMICS
Look for a sequel to "Night of the Living Dead" this November in a three-issue mini-series titled *Children of the Dead*, written by the movie's co-author **John A. Russo**.

PENNY FARTHING PRESS
December's debut of ***Captain Gravity*** showcases a 1940s story with Hollywood-native Joshua Jones turning into a superhero.

QUANTUM CAT ENTERTAINMENT
Frank Frazetta Fantasy Illustrated #4 in November features a Re:Gex alternate cover by **Rob Liefeld**.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
November's *Poison Elves* #41 puts Lusipher and Jace back on the road for more hilarious, violent hijinks. It's all by **Drew Hayes**.

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS
Love in Tights #1 hits in November as an anthology about after-hours love affairs between superheroes. No lie. **J. Torres** (*The Copybook Tales*) makes a contribution.

THORBY COMICS
November sees ***Johnny Cosmic*** #1, *The Night City* #1 and the 48-page *A Study in Scarlet*.

VIZ COMICS
Meet 10-year-old Ash and his pocket monster Pikachu, stars of Japan's hot ***Pokémon*** comic, when Viz releases the first issue of the four-part *Pokemon: The Electric Tale of Pikachu* in November.

WARP GRAPHICS
Richard and Wendy Pini celebrate 30 issues of ***Elfquest*** in November with the 64-page *Elfquest #30*.

PROLIFIC PETER

Everyone knows former *Aquaman*/current *Supergirl* author and novelist Peter David is a prolific writer. But do you really know how prolific? Here's a few fast facts on David's writing career.

SUPER-SCRIBE David's done it all.

DAVID PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

- He has written approximately 419 comics in his career. (That amounts to 3.2 books a month for 11 years.)
- He has written 41 fantasy, horror, sci-fi and comic character novels.
- His next book? It's *Imazadi II: Triangle*, the sequel to the *Imazadi* Star Trek novel.
- Also due this fall is *Once Burned*, the "New Frontier" installment in ongoing "Star Trek: Captain's Table" line.
- He has written movie screenplays including "Trancers IV" and "Trancers V."
- He has written TV episodes for "Babylon 5" and is the co-creator/co-writer of Nickelodeon's "Space Cases."
- His future plans include three books in the young-adult "Dinotopia" line and a possible "Babylon 5" novel series. ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**

SPICING UP COMICS

Love 'em or hate 'em, the Spice Girls seem to be everywhere. And in November, the British pop band hits comics. Fantagraphics' *Spicecapades*, a 48-page parody/tribute of the band, will feature work from more than a dozen creators, including underground legend Robert Crumb and *Hate*'s Peter Bagge.

The project's editor, Queen Itchie, said the band's leap from reality to comics was an easy one: "They're already cartoonish women." Perhaps that's why Bagge—a Spice Girls fan—when told of Itchie's plans for a Spice fanzine, suggested she pitch the concept to Fantagraphics as a comic.

But not all of the project's creators share Bagge's opinion: For instance, one comic short in the one-shot features the Spice Girls as flesh-eating monsters.

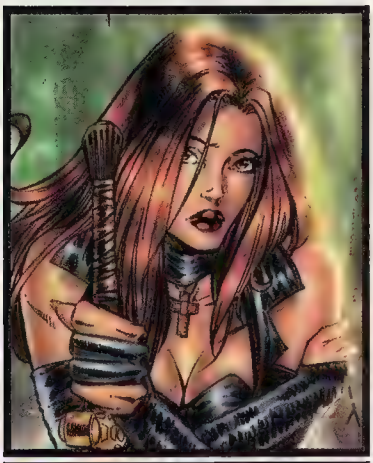
Although it's 75 percent comic book, *Spicecapades* will also include "critical essays," a song parody and other bizarre contributions. "It really runs the gamut," Itchie said.

Just as any self-respecting spice rack should. ■ **SCOTT A. AUBREY**

GAH!! Did these chicks get hopped up on Gingold or something? (That's a little Elongated Man joke for ya.) But the REAL question is: with Posh and Scary preggers, and Ginger gone, will we see a *Spicecapades* sequel spoof?

'AVENGELYNE,' MOORE RESURFACE AT AWESOME

After a two-year absence, Avengelyne—the sword-swinging heroine based on comic spokesmodel Cathy Christian—will be getting her own ongoing monthly in January at Awesome Entertainment. Rob Liefeld and Robert Napton (both of whom penned the original series) will be writing. No artist has been determined yet.



BACK IN BLACK Angelic superheroine Avengelyne returns after a two-year disappearance.

"We're treating her disappearance like real time," Liefeld explained. "In the comic, she hasn't been seen in two years. When we see her, she's in bad shape. It'll be a shock to see how much she's been beaten down."

In other Awesome news: All those Alan Moore *Supreme* and *Glory* stories that were shelved during Awesome's financial restructuring are finally seeing print. February 1998 will see the company launch *Alan Moore's Awesome Adventures*. Art is provided by Brandon Peterson, Chris Sprouse, Al Gordon and others.

And Moore himself is happy. "I was pleased with a lot of what I wrote," he said, "and a lot of people worked hard on it. I'm glad to hear Rob and Awesome are going to be doing it." ■ **CHRIS HUTCHINS**

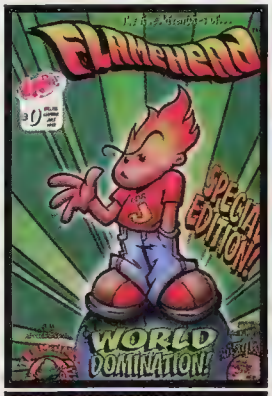
JNCO GETTING INTO COMICS

Why's JNCO, a major distributor of urban clothes for teenagers and young adults, entering the comic book publishing game? To repay the company's customers, Gene Jimenez, JNCO's director of publications said.

"Basically, we started putting embroideries of different characters on our clothes about a year ago," explained Jimenez, "and people went nuts for it." So JNCO's new line of comics—which debuted in August with the release of *Flamehead* and will include three additional titles, *The Goop*, *Burner* and *StichFit*—provides fans a closer look at those characters.

In addition to giving back to their customers, Jimenez also suggested the JNCO titles may bring new fans to the comic book fold. "We know the same kid that buys comic books is the same kid that buys our clothes."

And JNCO (pronounced "JEN-ko") swears these are comics for comics' sake. Any increase in clothing sales as a result of the comic line, Jimenez said, would be welcome...but secondary in importance. ■ **SCOTT A. AUBREY**



PHAT–AND FIERY Clothing manufacturer JNCO has branched out into comic books.

contest winners

LUCKY STIFFS

• **Jeremy Bennison** of Toronto, Ontario, Canada got his summer reading in as he nabbed a whoppin' 25 DC trade paperbacks in *Wizard* #83's "DC Summer Fun" contest! Fun indeed!

• **Chris Bokrand** of Naples, Fla. walked off with more Chaos! Comics Smiley merchandise than you can shake a skull and crossbones at–including original art by Jack Gray–in the "Hunt For Smiley" contest from *Wizard* #83!

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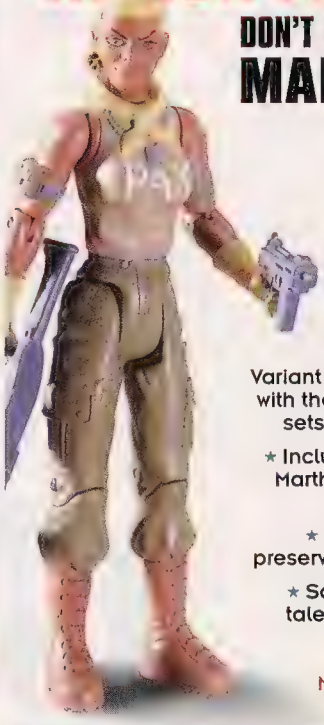

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DC BUYS WILDSTORM

Jim Lee is DC-exclusive; deal takes effect January 1

Jim Lee, the publisher and founder of WildStorm Productions, is making a move. And he's taking friends such as Joe Madureira and J. Scott Campbell with him. The new address they're calling home? DC Comics.

Sources close to WildStorm have revealed Lee is finalizing a deal to sell his company, which he founded six years ago as a branch of Image Comics, to Time-Warner, parent company for DC. While Lee declined comment and DC has made no official statement, *Wizard* has learned negotiations are in their closing stages. A final agreement is due by mid-October, with the official transfer to take place January 1, 1999.

The sale, a surprising blockbuster move, has far reaching implications in the comics industry. It also raises many questions, questions such as:

WHY THE SALE?

Sources cite a weak market and DC's stability. One WildStorm insider indicated that the most profitable areas for WildStorm's future looked to be toys, video games or Internet business—not comics, which WildStorm wanted to continue publishing. "But DC is appealing because they allow WildStorm to continue as is," according to one source. "DC *invented* the superhero genre. If they can't keep WildStorm a comic company, then no one can."

WHAT DOES WILDSTORM GAIN?

Two main things: A large corporate structure that sources say offers better print rates, better distribution, and DC parent company Time-Warner to take care of pitching and developing properties to other mediums, such as film and TV.

SITTING PRETTY Lee's deal with DC will allow him to do what he does best: draw comics.

The deal also frees up Lee, who reportedly had been shopping WildStorm around for some time, to devote more time to drawing comics. Lee can now get away from the business end to a large extent, and back into the creative end.

WHAT'S DC'S ADVANTAGE?

They get to tap into a younger WildStorm audience and nab hot talents like Cliffhanger partners Campbell (*Danger Girl*), Madureira (*Battle Chasers*) and Humberto Ramos (*Crimson*). They also get status, in a big way—by adding the entire WildStorm line under the DC umbrella, DC easily surpasses Marvel as the sales leader in the industry.

WHAT HAPPENS TO EXISTING WILDSTORM STAFF?

Staff members retain their jobs and WildStorm's office in San Diego, Calif., remains intact.

WILL DC CHARACTERS BE APPEARING WITH WILDSTORM CHARACTERS?

Not in the foreseeable future. For the time being, WildStorm superhero titles will exist as a separate imprint, much like DC's "Vertigo" line.

HOW ABOUT CLIFFHANGER AND HOMAGE?

WildStorm's two creator-owned lines remain just that: creator-owned. "We still retain full ownership of the characters," *Battle Chasers'* Madureira said. "We have complete control, regardless of where they're published."

AND ALAN MOORE'S NEW "AMERICA'S BEST COMICS" LINE?

Writer Alan Moore had refused to work for DC for many years, citing contract disputes over *Watchmen* and *V For Vendetta*, two DC-published series he penned in the mid-80s. But all indications are that as long as "ABC" is kept separate, Moore's line will be published as planned under this new arrangement.

WHO'S RUNNING WILDSTORM?

Lee. He will remain in charge

LEE PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

KNIGHT MOVES DC gains Madureira's *Battle Chasers* (top) and a possible Bat-artist in Jim Lee.

of WildStorm operations, and will have a five-year exclusive creative contract with DC, working only on DC or WildStorm books.

ANY CHANGES IN THE CURRENT PUBLISHING PLANS?

Only minor ones. The planned launches of *WildC.A.T.s* by Scott Lobdell and Travis Charest and "America's Best Comics" have been pushed back from December, 1998 to January, 1999. No new #1 issues for ongoing titles are planned.

WHERE'S THIS LEAVE IMAGE COMICS?

Diminished. WildStorm insiders promise that all Image obligations through December will be fulfilled. But WildStorm represented a large portion—about 25 percent—of Image's business. Image is much smaller now, not that it matters much to Image partner and Top Cow CEO Marc Silvestri. "A few years ago, it would have mattered more," Silvestri commented. "Attitude-wise, it doesn't affect us. We're going to continue to do what we do best."

WHAT ARE THE FUTURE POSSIBILITIES?

Huge. Indications are that 1999 is a "break-in period" that will see no real publishing changes at either WildStorm or DC. But come the new millennium? The sky's the limit. "I'm hoping they give us some books that are no longer being published at DC, and launch them through our end, *á la* 'Heroes Reborn,'" a WildStorm source said. Lee himself has been long rumored to be interested in Batman, and may be looking Gotham's way in 2000. "There's no way to have a career without doing some Batman stuff," one source observed. "And Jim really hasn't done any...yet." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN AND MATTHEW SENREICH**

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MEPHISTO VS. MALEBOLGIA

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

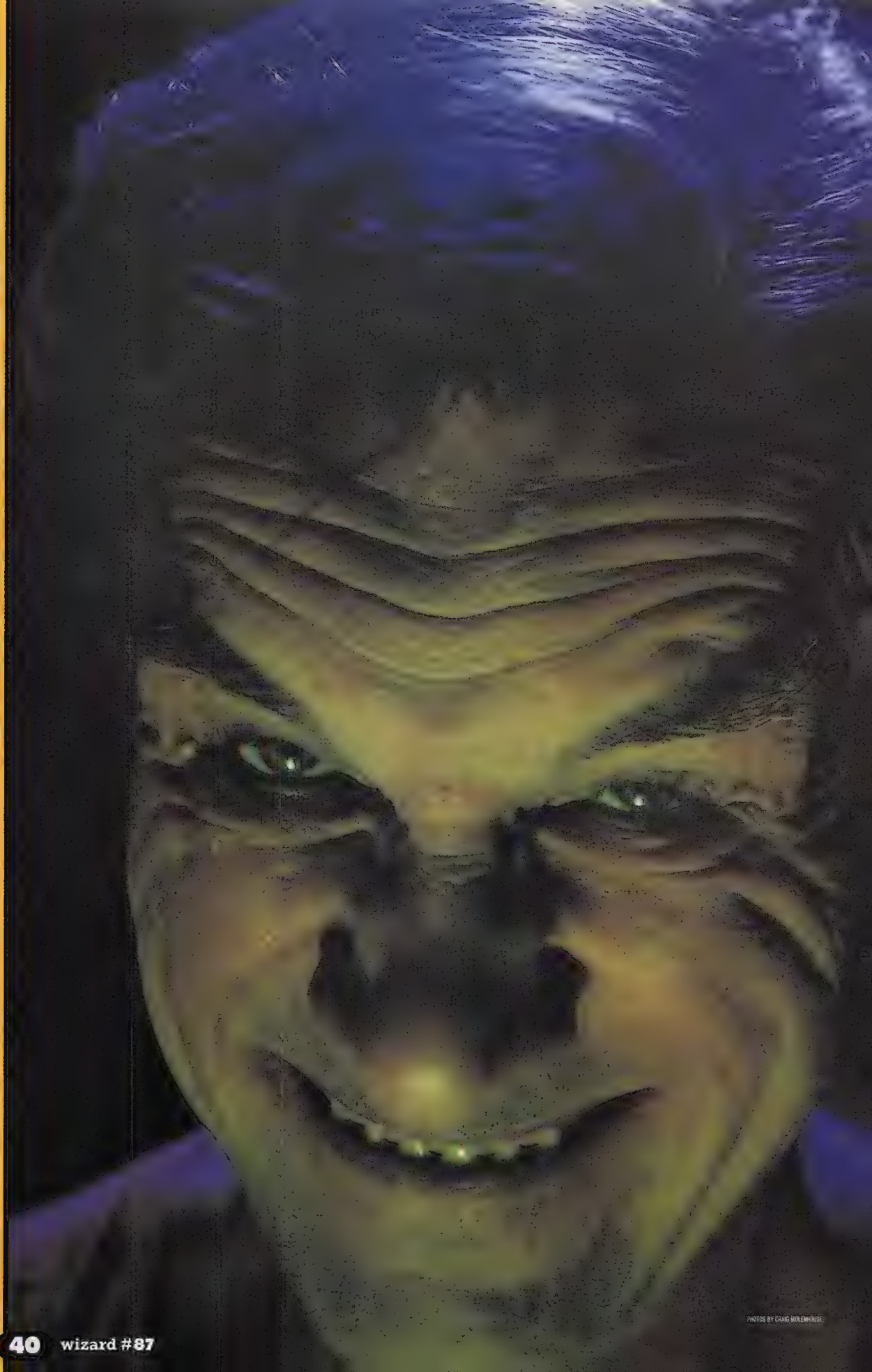
6'6"	HEIGHT	10'-20' (varies)
310lbs	WEIGHT	1-2 tons
78"	REACH	120"-240"
Hell	HOMETOWN	Hell
Three	SYLLABLES	Three
28	TEETH	208

The lord of Hell, Mephisto, is a supernatural being of tremendous power who feeds off the suffering of souls. Though immeasurably powerful, he seems restricted by certain unwritten rules which prevent him from attacking the innocent...unless he can trick them into corruption.

Malebolgia, lord of Hell from another plane of reality, is a towering monstrosity of ancient might bent on conquering Heaven. To achieve his goal, he recruits human souls and twists them into the formidable soldiers of the underworld known as the Hellspawns.

tha winnah... Arriving unannounced in Malebolgia's chambers, Mephisto would hover before Malebolgia as the two lords of Hell try and trick the other into revealing some weakness. Growing impatient with Mephisto's insolence, Malebolgia would prove the aggressor as the much-smaller Mephisto focuses on evading his blows and continuing his taunts. Now enraged, Malebolgia would focus squarely on his diminutive target...which would prove his undoing. With his attentions focused so completely, Malebolgia fails to see the result of Mephisto's FIRST trip to his realm: the marshaling of the Hellspawns to rebel against their master in exchange for Mephisto's promise to set them free. Having already weakened himself in his chase of Mephisto, Malebolgia slaughters the majority of the Hellspawns but—with his kingdom quaking around him—it's Mephisto who delivers the killing blow and begins his reign as the dark lord of two realms. (And those "free" Hellspawns? His new army. Mephisto ain't called the Lord of Lies for nothing.)

this month's battle drawn by JIM CALAFIORE AND PETER PALMIOTTI



PHOTOS BY CRAIG MOLENHOUSE

DEATH BECOMES HIM

New 'Punisher' artist BERNIE WRIGHTSON finds comfort in the brutal and bloody world of horror

Which slippery corner of the mind inspires a man to draw splintered ribcages, rotting flesh and ax-wielding maniacs? The giggling, blood-spattered schoolgirls, the brain-craving undead— from where do these monsters come?

Bernie Wrightson, widely considered the master of the modern horror comic, sparks a Marlboro Light, takes a drag and raises those monstrous eyebrows in introspection.

He exhales, and smiles.

"You know when you slow down to see the accident on the side of the road?" the lanky penciler for the new *Punisher* mini-series says. "You rubberneck. You look for the blood and the bodies. Everybody does that. I know kids become fascinated with death and mutilation. How different am I from anyone else? I just didn't grow out of it."

The studio in his North Hollywood apartment is small, but it shows what the 49-year-old is about. A human skeleton smiles from the ceiling in the hallway. His video collection—which consumes half of one wall—bristles with horror greats: "House of Dracula," "Basket Case," "Re-Animator," "The Thing."

But Wrightson's not the creepmeister you might think. He's a self-proclaimed "beer and pretzels guy," willing to chat about anything—from rumors going around years ago that he had leprosy ("I developed an allergic reaction to something. That was it!") to looking out for friends ("When I'm king of America, Stephen King will be known as the best fiction writer of all time"). And he's quick with a joke. His response to a query about his eyebrows? "I don't know. I think my mom had a thing for Muppets."

BY CHRIS HUTCHINS

Wrightson has a thing for comics. His latest project is September's *Punisher* four-issue mini-series for Marvel Comics' Marvel Knights line. Pairing Wrightson with Marvel's gun-toting vigilante might seem an odd match, but Knights editors Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti planned to give Punisher a new spin, tailor-made for Wrightson's horrific art style. The story, by Christopher Golden and Tom Sniegoski, has Frank Castle (who had committed suicide before issue #1 begins) brought back from the dead, given magical powers by a guardian angel. Castle learns he was actually a pawn for a demon named Olivier, plotting to take over Hell.

"The guys have given him a supernatural twist, which I like," Wrightson says, taking another drag from his smoke. "Frank Castle basically learns that his family died because his guardian angel screwed up. Now he has these powers. He's taking on demons. There's a lot of Heaven and Hell here; something that really appeals to me. Maybe it's the Catholic in me."

Palmiotti, a self-professed "Bernie Wrightson geek," inks the book. "When the Marvel Knights happened, we thought, '*Punisher*. Bernie Wrightson.' It's so simple," he says. "Bernie's the best horror artist in the business."

Best horror artist. Master of the macabre. The Stephen King of comic books. The descriptions of Wrightson go on. Mention the accolades to him—or the big-name artists who consider him an inspiration—and you'll see him smile in appreciation and then shake his head, recoiling from the hype. This everyday guy doesn't like the spotlight. He never has.

"I'm very insecure about my work. To this day, I sit on pins and needles when I send something to an editor," says Wrightson, who

VITAL STATS

NAME: Bernie Wrightson
OCCUPATION: Comic book and conceptual artist
BORN: October 27, 1948, in Baltimore, Md.
BASE OF OPERATIONS: North Hollywood, Calif.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Became an overnight superstar on DC's *Swamp Thing* in 1972. Elevated to legendary status as a horror artist as a result of his illustrations to accompany Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, released in 1983. Worked with horror novelist Stephen King on the comic adaptation of "Creepshow," and provided illustrations for *The Cycle of the Werewolf* and *The Stand*. Over the last 10 years has drawn such mini-series as *Batman: The Cult* and *Batman/Aliens*. Also did conceptual sketches for both "Ghostbusters" flicks.
LENGTH OF EYEBROWS: "A good inch to two inches. I trim them myself."

grew up in a blue-collar Baltimore household, weaned on gore-filled EC Comics. "I don't think of myself in any way as an influence. I'm just a guy who puts his pants on like everyone else."

Still, that legendary status allows Wrightson to pick and choose his projects. But it wasn't always this way. The story began when a 19-year-old Wrightson went to the 1968 New York Comic Convention for kicks. Armed with a folder of drawings and a story called "Uncle Bill's Barrel" he'd written for a fanzine, Wrightson had a blast meeting old friends and new industry acquaintances, passed the story around and went home.

A week later, DC Comics called. Editor Dick Giordano read "Barrel" and wanted to know if Wrightson would like to be the artist on *Nightmaster*, a project penned by young writer (now legendary *Batman* editor and writer) Denny O'Neil. "I moved to New York City that weekend," Wrightson recalls, pausing long enough to envision himself then. "Wow. Nineteen and moving to the city. I thought I was indestructible."

DC reminded him he wasn't; the editors weren't happy with the first few pages he turned in. "God, it was bad stuff," Wrightson says with a laugh. "I just completely froze up. I wanted every line to be absolutely perfect. I thought, 'My career is over after seven pages.'" The powers-that-be relocated Wrightson to the company's *House of Secrets/House of Mystery* books, doing short stories. "That was more my cup of tea," Wrightson says, smiling. "Spooky houses and Victorian characters."

Then, in 1972, it happened. *Swamp Thing*. Virtually overnight, an eight-page story made Wrightson one of the hottest artists around. "[Writer] Len Wein and I did a story about this swamp creature in *House of Secrets*, and the response was just incredible," Wrightson recalls. "Those books never got much mail, but that issue got an awful lot of it." The success spawned an ongoing series, where the artist rocketed his way to DC's highest rate at the time: $65 per page.

O'Neil knows Wrightson's story well. "I've watched him from the beginning. The reason why he's been so successful is *the guy can draw*," O'Neil says. "He has the basic skill of putting bare lines on paper, and not using some technique to cover up mistakes. Add his natural talent for the macabre and you have someone whose style is absolutely unique."

After two years on *Swamp Thing*, Wrightson took that style to Warren Publications for an opportunity to work in black and white. With his rep and eye for the gory details, he made good money...enough to goof off, pay the rent and dedicate time to a project he'd obsessed over: *Frankenstein*. His plan was to do a series of drawings based on the Mary Shelley novel. Wrightson worked on *Frankenstein* for six years, doing more than 40 drawings for the book, eventually collected with the novel for Marvel Comics in 1983.

It's an understatement to say the images in *Frankenstein* are extraordinarily detailed. For a scene in Dr. Frankenstein's lab, Wrightson drew hundreds of beakers, test-tubes and books. These works are widely considered some of the best horror illustrations ever. Industry powerhouse artist Alex Ross (*Kingdom Come*) and Wrightson-influenced horror artist Kelley Jones (*Batman*) agree.

"When I saw *Frankenstein*, I was utterly blown away," Jones says. "I've gotten offers to do comic adaptations of the film and I wouldn't touch them. As far as I'm concerned, [*Frankenstein*'s] the single finest piece of art from anyone who has done comic books. It's *Wrightson*." Adds Ross: "Bernie was the most influential artist of my youth. I remem-

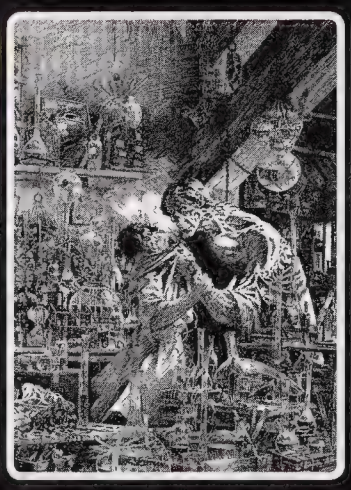
CREEP SHOW

Wrightson Picks His Five Most Horrific Images

Bernie Wrightson has been horrifying people for 30 years with his comic books, posters and paintings. Here is Wrightson's list of his five most frightening images, and why he thinks they're creepy:

'THE TELL-TALE HEART'
In his *Edgar Allen Poe Portfolio*, Wrightson adapted a scene from Poe's short story of the same name. "I read it over and over, trying to find an image somewhere other than the punch line, the end of the story. I couldn't find it. I love the idea of this guy's conscience getting the better of him and sending him over the edge."

'I SHALL BE WITH YOU ON YOUR WEDDING NIGHT'
Taken from his *Frankenstein* illustrations, Wrightson says, "This scene is what hammers the big nail into the heart of the story for me–the monster's rage just bubbles over here. Rather than kill Frankenstein himself, he's going to destroy the things he loves most. That kind of rage is frightening."



ber wanting to do a painted version of *Frankenstein* in his style."

Wrightson smiles in appreciation, but downplays the praise. "All I know is I was totally sincere about being loyal to the book. It became my personal obsession," he says. "When I was just a kid, I saw the movie on TV and I felt something inside me move. I was fascinated by this thing without a name. And when I was ready, I decided to tell his story. I don't think I've done anything since that's been as good."

Wrightson says that with a tinge of sadness. "It's the best thing I've ever done. I don't think anything since has been nearly as good—certainly not as passionate. It was my personal obsession, and I did it. I couldn't do it now. It's a sad thing to admit, but a little part of the fire inside me died when *Frankenstein* was done."

And Wrightson fans have seen it. Since *Frankenstein*, Wrightson's style has become looser, less detailed. There's more focus on composition now.

"Basically, I'm kind of following my heart in my work," he says. "I believe the story matters. If you look at Frank Miller's work, it's very sparse. But it moves…and it moves you. To keep things moving, you have to toss out a lot of excess baggage."

As Wrightson's style has evolved, he's expanded his horizons to Hollywood. He's done concept sketches for the movies "Ghostbusters" and "Ghostbusters 2." Last year, he collaborated with director Peter Jackson ("The Frighteners") on a King Kong movie project. Universal Pictures canceled it in pre-production.

One of his best working relationships is with horror novelist Stephen King. King approached Wrightson in 1981 to draw the comic adaptation of the movie "Creepshow." Wrightson did illustrations for King's 1985 book *The Cycle of the Werewolf* and drawings for the 1990 version of *The Stand*.

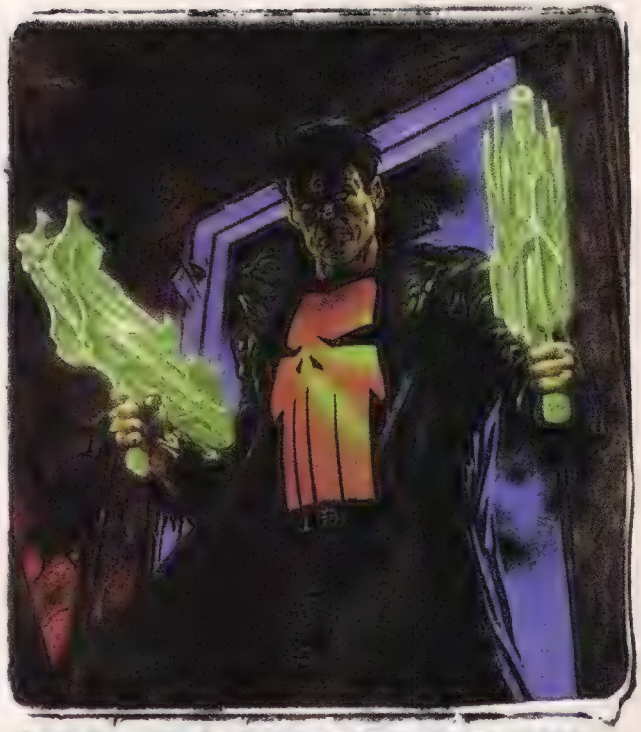
"It's the perfect collaboration: Steve writes and I draw," Wrightson laughs. "We've never told one another how to do their job. I'll make every effort to work with Steve because I'm a big fan of his work and I consider him a friend. If he asks for a favor, I'll bend over backwards for him."

Though Wrightson says there's nothing's in the works with King right now, that's okay; his hands are full. He just finished working with special-effects company KNB on Robert Rodriguez's horror flick "Faculty." He's currently working on sketches for the upcoming creature feature "Cave." He's even doing character and environment designs for a Universal Digital Arts video game based on the classic Universal monsters, including Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster and Wolf Man.

This is the path Wrightson wants to explore now. He's looking for a change. He's turning 50. He's going to quit smoking. And—for now—he's going to leave comic books. Wrightson's taking a sabbatical after *The Punisher* to work in Hollywood as a conceptual artist.

But Wrightson knows without hesitation he'll return. "I'm not saying 'I'll never go back.' I've said that too many times in the past to know better," he says, a smile growing on his face, those wicked eyebrows rising. "I love this medium too much to leave forever.

"I grew up on it. I was inspired by it."



FITTING PUNISHMENT Wrightson's Punisher has traded killing criminals for killing demons in the character's new mini-series.

Kentucky-based writer Chris Hutchins' "weekend at Bernie's" included tagging along with Wrightson for two Hollywood parties and a tour of Los Angeles. Hutch also bummed a lotta smokes offa him. Wotta mooch.

'STALEMATE'

"I was going for the gross-out here. I've seen a lot of zombie movies, but I don't think I've ever seen anything like *this*. These guys are rotten, man. They're about two steps away from liquefied flesh. Think about it: How do you kill something that's already dead?"

'MEMENTOES'

"I had something disturbing originally planned: there were going to be other body parts on the fence. Feet with nail polish on the toes, hands with rings on the fingers. But this black humor started to creep in, and I decided to just go with the heads. It's subjective as hell, but for me it's really funny. This is a guy who's *so proud* of his work."

'THE OZ EFFECT'

Wrightson did unused concept sketches for a '90s remake of "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." He says, "The movie was originally going to take place on an Army base, with soldiers getting 'body snatched.' When someone realizes that Agent Orange is a defoliant and can kill the pod people, this is the end product. My rationale was, 'These are plant creatures, so I can get as gruesome as I want.' And I did." ■ CH

STRANGE BREW

CHAOS! COMICS' BRIAN PULIDO STIRS UP THE HORROR AT MARVEL WITH 'THE SUPERNATURALS'

By Jim McLauchlin

Chaos! Comics Publisher Brian Pulido has the ultimate trick-or-treat surprise in his bag—a chance to rain chaos down on Marvel Comics.

"Dude, I am *such* a child of '70s Marvel!" Pulido says. "I grew up on characters like Ghost Rider and Werewolf by Night. I feel like these guys are my crazy cousins."

Nice family. Now Pulido, known for his Chaos! creations Lady Death and Evil Ernie, holds a family reunion with Marvel horror in *The Supernaturals*, a four-issue "What If?"-style mini-series hitting weekly in October. But Pulido's doing it with a twist, modernizing Marvel's classic spookies.

"In the '70s, these characters were perfect for their time," Pulido says. "They were young, they were cool. But things have changed."

It seems a "Chaos Event" swept away Marvel's "normal" heroes such as the Avengers and the Fantastic Four some 13 years ago. Now, as a second "Chaos Event" looks ready to hit, Marvel's mystical protectors, among them Dr. Strange and Merlin, are vanishing. "There's no one left to set things right," Pulido says with a fiendish chuckle, "except the freaks. But they'll band together and step up."

So will Marc Andreyko (*The Lost*), who's scripting over Pulido's plot and Ivan Reiss (*Lady Death: Dragon Wars*), who pencils the series. Jim Balent (*Catwoman*) is providing covers. But all the new redesigns started with Pulido. "The fun part," he says, "is breathing new life into characters who everyone *thinks* are nobodies. But to me, they've always been somebodies. I'm the horror weirdo. And they're the characters I really care about."

So join us, if you dare, as we step inside Pulido's head...where the monsters dwell.

Ghost Rider

Pulido ain't too fond of the current Ghost Rider, so it's back-to-basics, specifically with artist Mike Ploog's original design from *Marvel Spotlight* #5. "Ploog is worthy of worship!" Pulido says excitedly. "I defy anyone to say that his design could be improved. He's a flaming skull in a leather jacket on a motorcycle. How perfect is that?"

As for Ghost Rider's "secret identity," just like the original, he's Johnny Blaze. But this Blaze is a 19-year-old, BMX-biking, extreme sports athlete. "He tears up the X-Games," Pulido says. "But when the group gets drawn together, he'll be the disruptive influence. He's the rebel, and he's got a pretty rotten attitude."

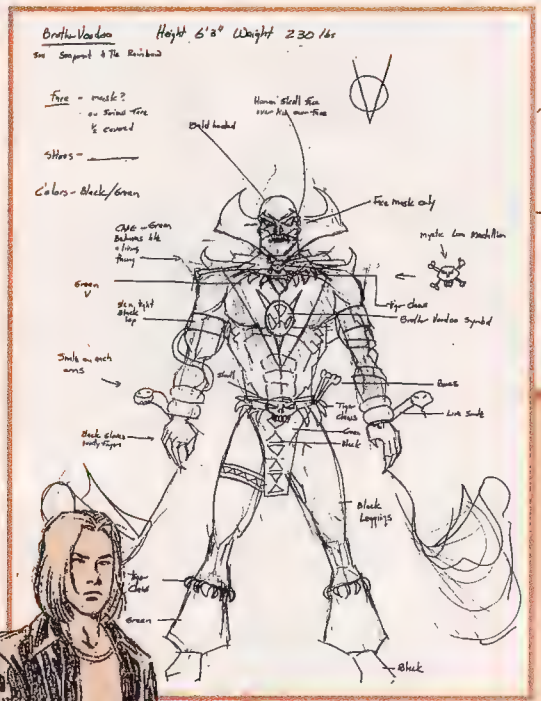
SKETCHES BY IVAN REISS. INSET ROUGH SKETCHES BY BRIAN PULIDO

Brother Voodoo

Pulido went to the source for Brother Voodoo, checking out every voodoo book from the library. "[Librarians] gave me some strange looks," he says.

Apparently, though, the reading paid off. "I just went nuts and tacked on all the voodoo hoodoo I could," Pulido says. Living snakes, which are powerful voodoo tools, will always be around Brother's arms. But the mystic "loa" medallion around his neck is the big gun. "He can trance and possess up to three people at a time with the loa," Pulido says.

As Jericho Drumm, Brother Voodoo is a highly successful 22-year-old R&B music producer. He's also the leader of the misfit group. "When the first 'Chaos Event' occurred," Pulido hints, "he was involved. And he lost his brother in the event. So he's kind of a dark, brooding character carrying a lot of responsibility on his shoulders. He wants to use the upcoming event to set things right."



Johnny Blaze

Black Cat

The Black Cat *was* a Spider-Man supporting character, but Marvel let Pulido sneak her into his fold. "Her power has involved 'controlling' luck," Pulido explains. "That always struck me as potentially supernatural."

And her powers–the ability to alter fields of probability around her–are her problem in *The Supernaturals*. Felicia Hardy is a 20-year-old whiz who works on political campaigns. "Her candidates usually win," Pulido explains. "Things usually go her way. So she's always questioning: Is it because of her or her powers?"

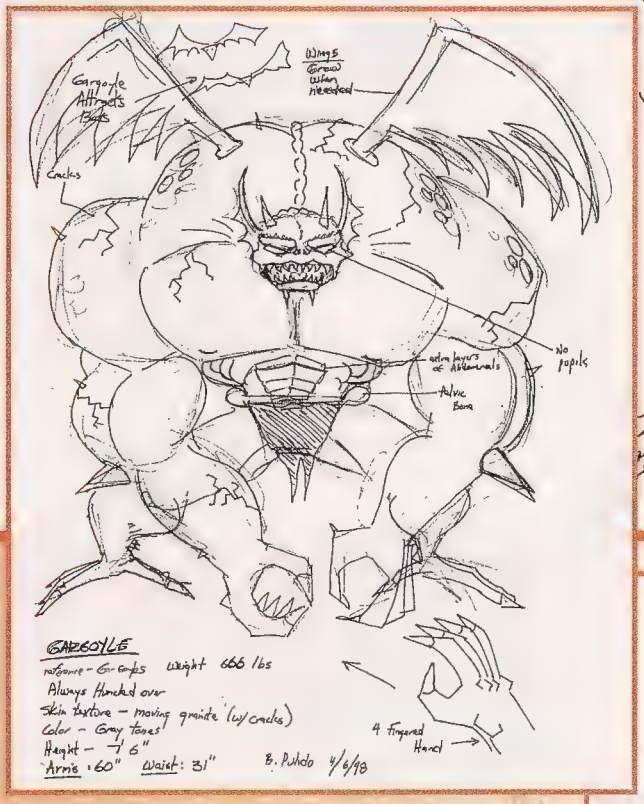
Then there's the Cat's costume. While Pulido says he was just going for utility and something protective in her design, he notes that her outfit's not even hers. "Brother Voodoo gives it to her, and it seems to unlock a saucier, sexier side of her."

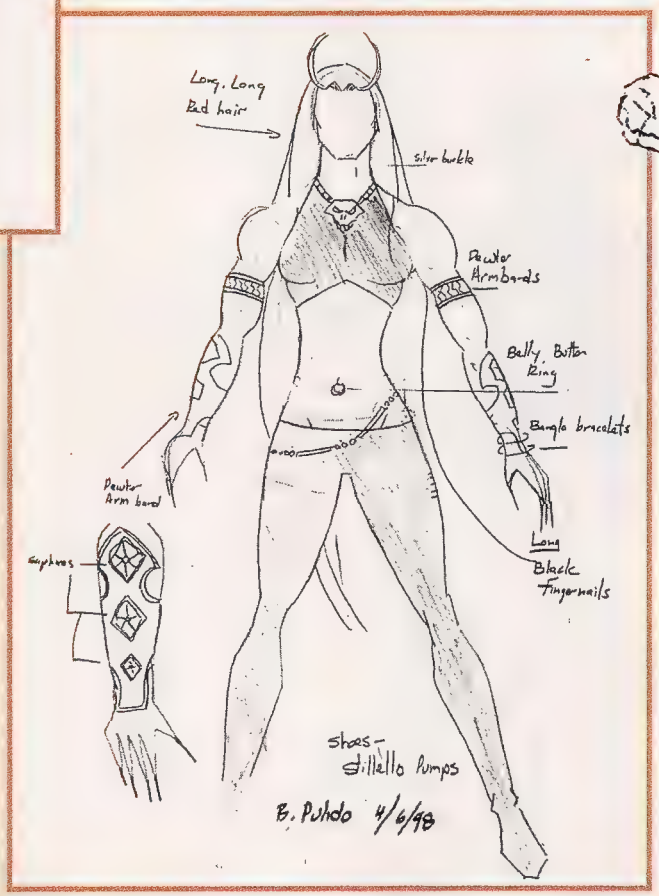
Gargoyle

You may recall Marvel's previous Gargoyle as a crusty orange senior citizen. "I couldn't *help* but trash that idea!" Pulido sighs. "Gargoyles are gray. They're big. They're scary. I wanted someone physically imposing in the group, and he's it."

He's also Isaac Christians, a 17-year-old champion high school athlete who led a charmed life...until a cult conducted a mystical experiment on him, merging him with a stone gargoyle. "He'll look like he should be hanging off a building somewhere," Pulido says. "He'll have concrete-like skin, with cracks and everything. He'll look cool as hell!"

But looks aren't everything. He'll also be able to siphon people's life energy with Hellfire blasts. Unfortunately, his mere presence also slowly siphons off the life of those around him. "He detests the Gargoyle persona," Pulido says. "He wants to be done with it completely. He's our tragic character, the beautiful soul in the body of the beast."

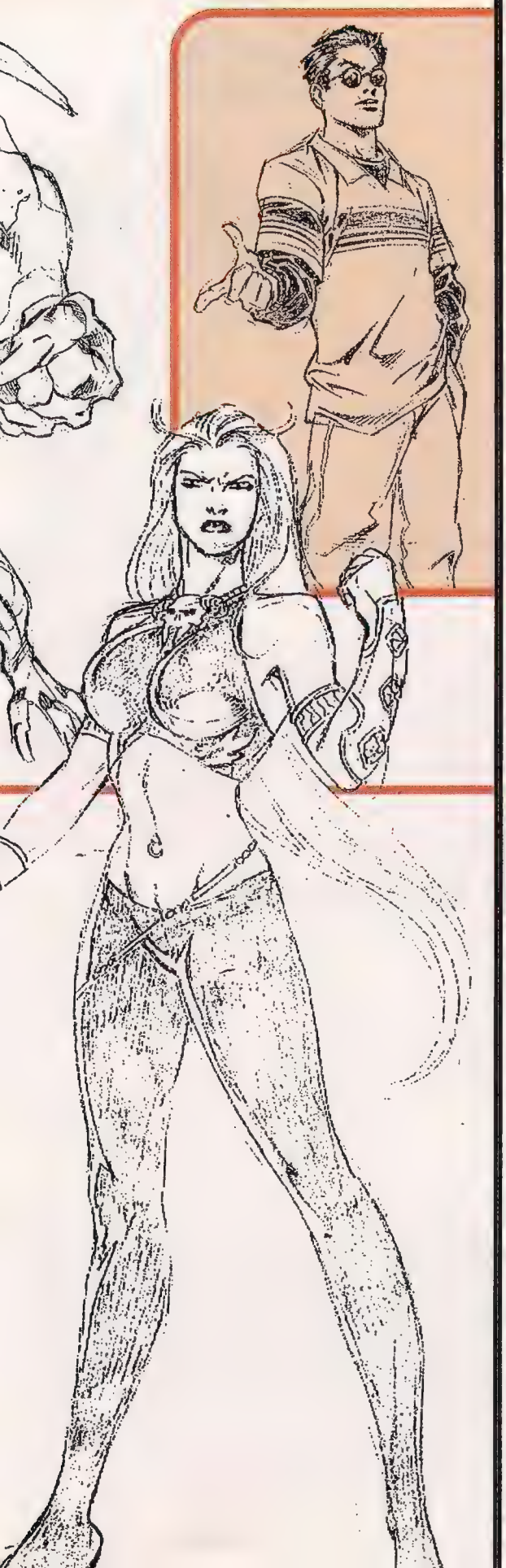




Satana

Marvel's *one* redesign rejection happened with Satana. "I found this great, cool Marvel magazine from the '70s with John Romita [Sr.] art on a Satana story," Pulido says. "It was perfect! So I went with the Romita design, where she wears these low, hip-hugger pants." Long story short: Marvel made Pulido pull up her pants.

Regardless, Satana still shows fashion sense in her design, mainly due to her alter ego: 19-year-old runway model Melissa Ramos. "A devout Catholic," according to Pulido, "Melissa became possessed by the spirit of Satana during a near-death experience." So how's Melissa feel about sharing time with a demon sorceress from Hell? "Satana is a demon, but she wants to turn to the light," Pulido says. "They work together. That's the nature of most horror characters. They've usually got some extreme inner conflict about who they are. And most just want to be normal."



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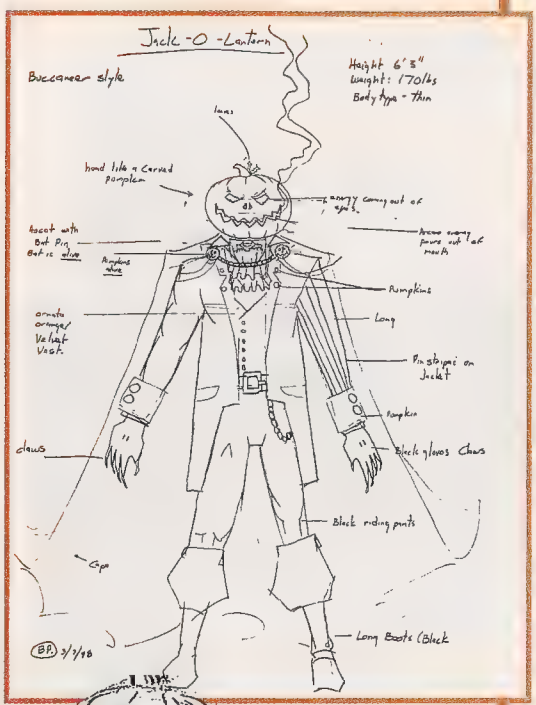
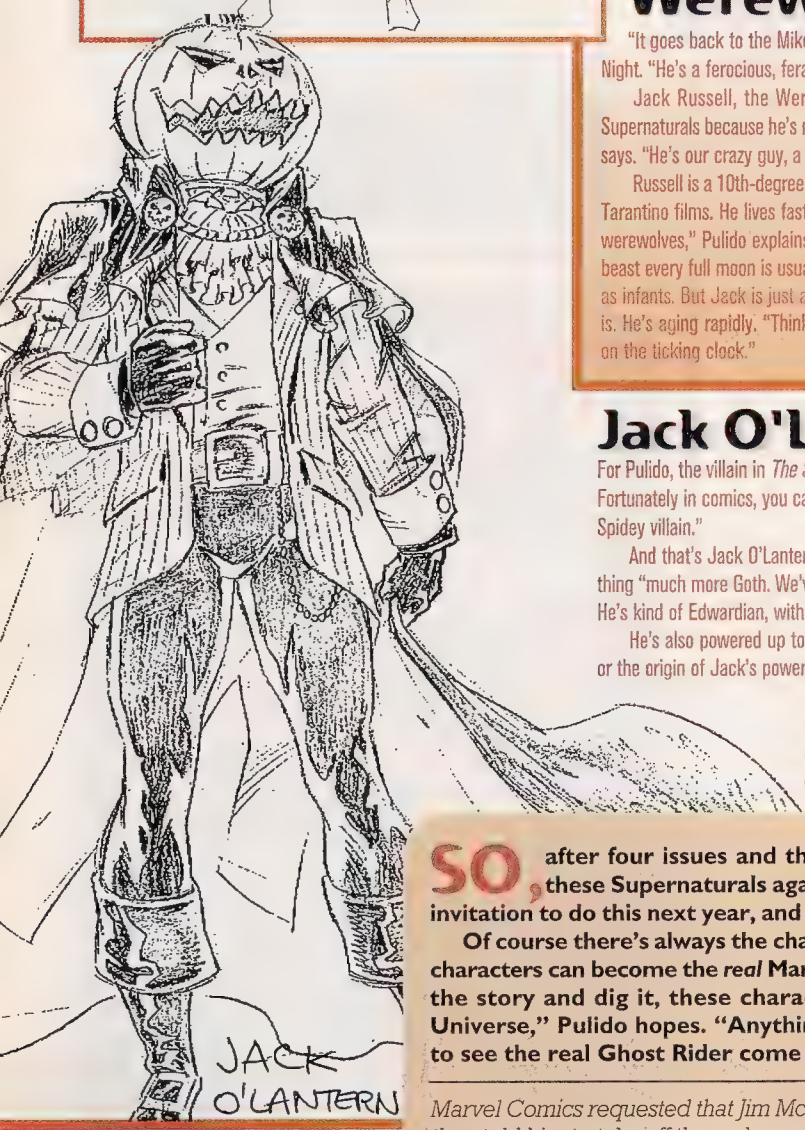


Werewolf By Night

"It goes back to the Mike Ploog original again," Pulido says of the Werewolf By Night. "He's a ferocious, feral beast. That's all."

Jack Russell, the Werewolf's human persona, is different from the other Supernaturals because he's not conflicted about who he is. "He *loves* the werewolf," Pulido says. "He's our crazy guy, a fast talker who'll even spout one-liners as the wolf."

Russell is a 10th-degree black belt who lives on a steady diet of Bruce Lee and Quentin Tarantino films. He lives fast, 'cause that's the only way he *can* live. "He's the son of two werewolves," Pulido explains, a rare occurrence because the transformation from man to beast every full moon is usually too much for a baby to endure. Most birth-werewolves die as infants. But Jack is just a little too tough, and now he knows just how precious his life is. He's aging rapidly. "Think of him as aging in dog years," Pulido says. "He knows he's on the ticking clock."



Jack O'Lantern

For Pulido, the villain in *The Supernaturals* should be "someone grand, theatric and insane. Fortunately in comics, you can build that guy out of someone who started as a fifth-string Spidey villain."

And that's Jack O'Lantern. Pulido has ditched Jack's battle suit and given him something "much more Goth. We've got a lot of different influences from different time periods. He's kind of Edwardian, with a real touch of buccaneer."

He's also powered up to an insane degree. Pulido won't spill the beans on the extent or the origin of Jack's powers, but promises readers will be able to pick up hints early on.

And Jack's motivation? "He wants to drive everyone as insane as he is, of course," Pulido cackles. "He wants the second 'Chaos Event' to take place. Desperately. And the Supernaturals want to stop it. Instant conflict."

SO, after four issues and the dust clears, what's next? Will we see these Supernaturals again? "Possibly," Pulido says. "We have an invitation to do this next year, and an invitation to do even *more* at Marvel."

Of course there's always the chance that these "What If?" versions of the characters can become the *real* Marvel McCoys. "I imagine if people embrace the story and dig it, these characters could carry over into the Marvel Universe," Pulido hopes. "Anything's possible. Hey, I'd love it. I just want to see the real Ghost Rider come back."

Marvel Comics requested that Jim McLauchlin stop wearing hip-huggers, too. And they told him to take off those damn platform shoes!

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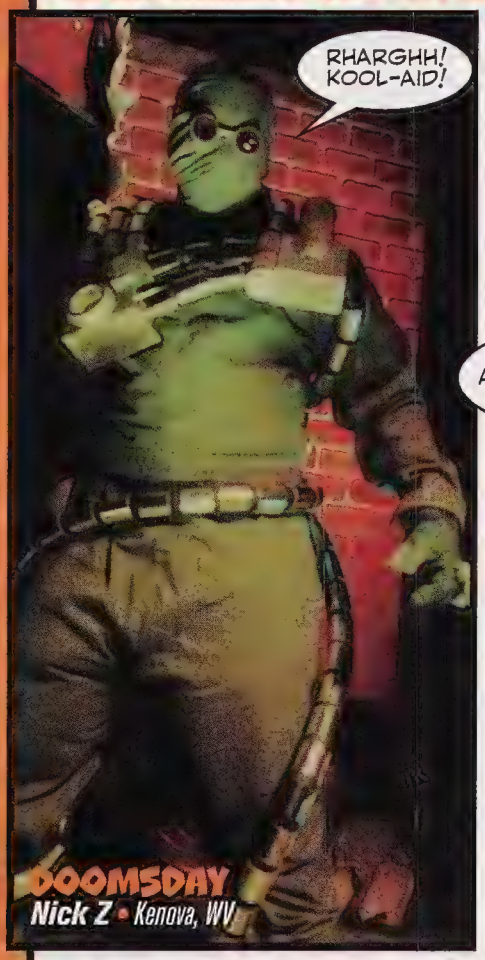
The Winners of the Seventh Annual Halloween Cos

BOO-HAH! This time around each of the 21 entrants earning an honorable mention wins a bag of 13 autographed comics, a Marvel model kit, a Lady Death poster and trade paperback, a Full Moon Toys action figure, a "Spawn" movie poster, a *ToyFare* exclusive figure and a *Wizard* #1/2 comic. The two runners-up win alla that loot PLUS a Laser Mach Thor sculpture, an *Alien Outreach* trade paperback, an X-Men video, a Marvel T-shirt and a Deadpool collector's pack of comics. Finally, the grand-prize winner takes that all home in addition to the giganto grand-prize package, including Clayburn Moore-signed action figures of Lady Death, Lady Demon, Purgatori and Evil Ernie, a Frank Frazetta princess Christmas ornament, a "Babylon 5" Ambassador G'Kar action figure, the Star Wars trilogy on video, the Star Wars Electronic Battle game, a Luke Skywalker model kit and a new VCR with a selection of scary movies! **Congratulations to all the winners. Now...let the madness begin!**

ROBIN
Matthew Tolosa
Daly City, CA



DOOMSDAY
Nick Z • *Kenova, WV*

TUSKEN RAIDER
John Celio & Mark Siekierski
Danville, CA

BATMAN & ROBIN
Rogerio Balding • *Brazil*
BATMAN: *Leandro Assombro*
ROBIN: *H. Romeu Pinto*

P WITH GO 7

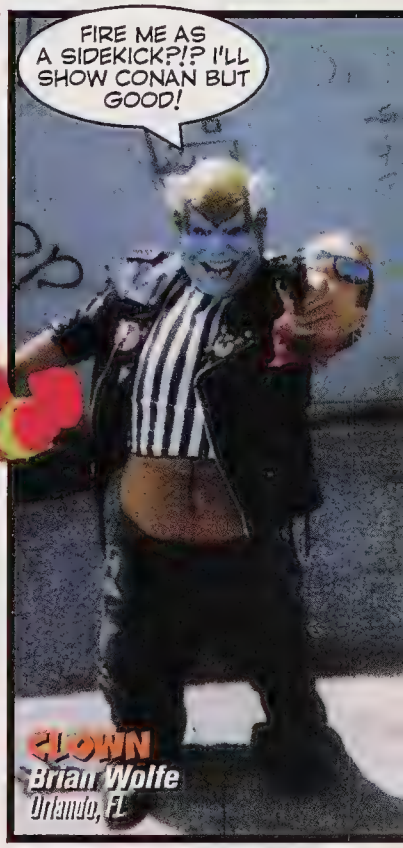
me Contest

SPIDER-MAN
Matt Abbott • *Sacramento, CA*

BLINK
Julia Bush • Aurora, CO

FLASH
Dana Smith
Kenova, WV

HELLBOY
Steve Rapuzzi • *Tampa, FL*



CLOWN
Brian Wolfe
Orlando, FL

GREEN ARROW & THE PHANTOM
Joe Reader • *Mission Hills, CA*

MADMAN
Luke Zetner • *Eugene, OR*

SUPERMAN
Roy Schwartz • *Tel Aviv, Israel*

MR. MIRACLE & BIG BARDA
Bill & Michelle Kiefer
Seaside Heights, NJ

CHEF
Earl Woodruff Jr.
Boulder City, NV

BEAST & GREEN GOBLIN
Scott Crawford • *Columbus, OH*

ORIGINAL TEEN TITANS ***Robin & Tom Ly*** • *Houston, TX*
ROBIN: Tom Ly *KID FLASH:* Andrew Newhouse *WONDER GIRL:* Dianna Schoenrock
SPEEDY: Robby Bohler *AQUALAD:* Kurt Rudolph

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GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

THE CREEPER

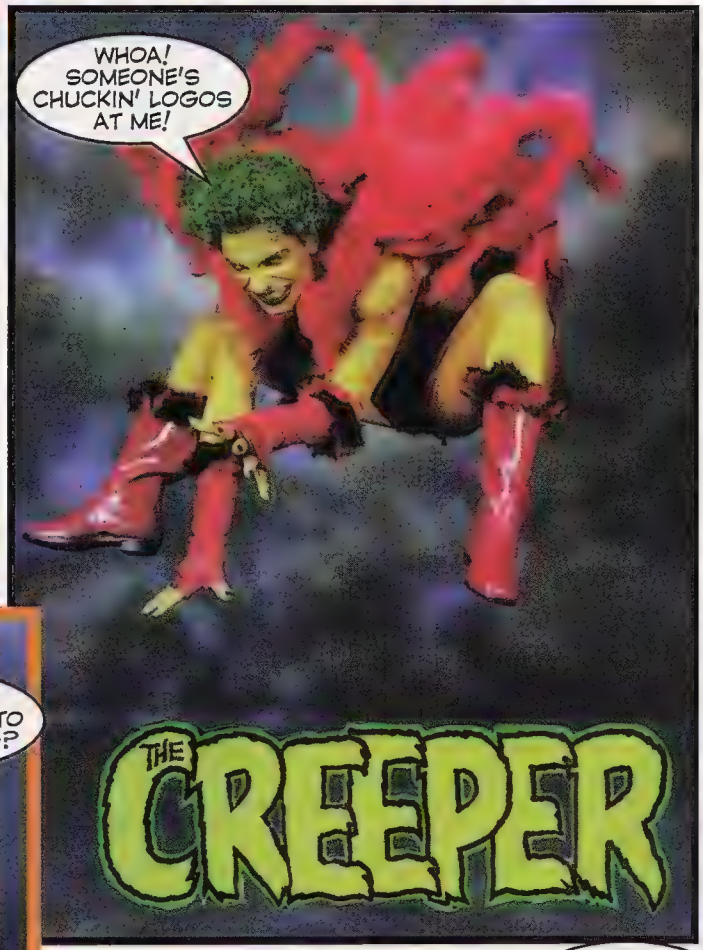
Kelly Delcambre • *New Iberia, LA*

Back to back, baby! That's what our man Kelly here has done by claiming his second consecutive victory in the annual *Wizard* Halloween Costume Contest. This year he did it with an awesome version of DC's nut-case hero The Creeper.

"The Silver Age Creeper reminds me of a hyena in drag," says Kelly of one of the first characters that caught his eye as a child. "Just look at the costume. I took that and tried not to be overly dramatic with it."

After a year of research, Kelly says he started putting the costume together. "I started with odds and ends. The hair is mine, the face is mine. I can articulate well," says Kelly. Add to that lots of face paint, false fingernails, gloves, a body suit, trunks, boots and a multitude of furry boas.

What's next? "The rest of the Justice Society characters I talked about last year are still in progress," Kelly hints. "The tough part is finding good models and keeping them in shape. I have one friend on the Captain Marvel diet—he can't fit into the costume."



KELLY DIDN'T STOP THERE. He whipped up a few Star Wars costumes to cement his place as the champion...

BOBA FETT

4-LOM & ZUCKUSS

Ahhh...another two dozen fans humiliated in front of half a million people; another costume contest comes to a close. Thanks again to all who entered and, to those who didn't, one thing: If we ran a photo of that weird "Disco-Bert" guy, odds are we mighta run a photo of your costume as well. IF you had entered. So c'mon...next year get off your butt and enter! We need more people to make fun of.

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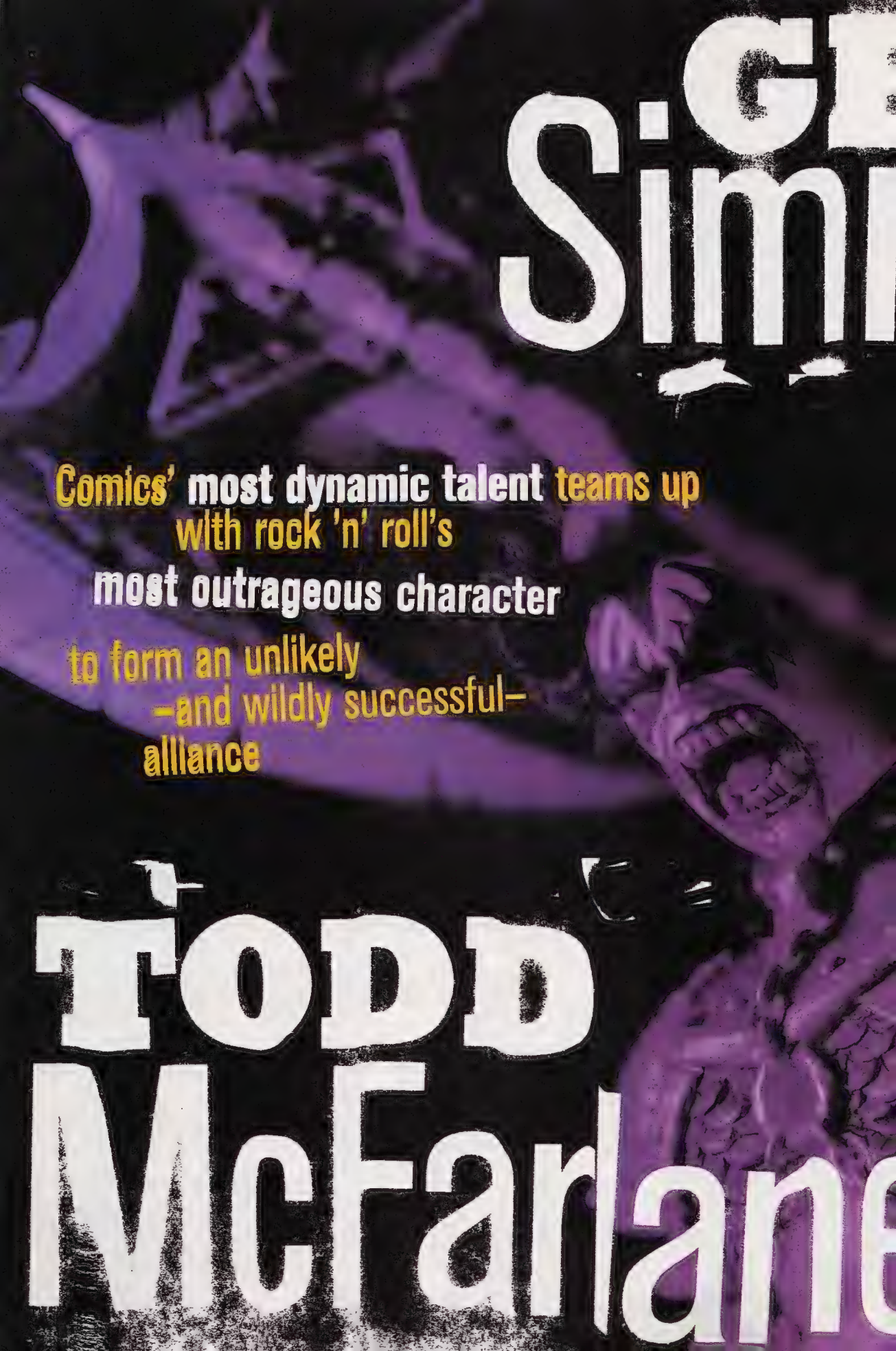
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–and wildly successful–
alliance
TODD
McFarlane

THE WIZARD Q&A

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN

Todd McFarlane is 30 minutes late. As if Gene Simmons cares. He's got plenty to keep him busy.

Gene's in his office—an overstuffed room on the bottom floor of a tiny guest house located in front of his surprisingly normal-looking Beverly Hills home. He shares this home with former Playmate of the Year Shannon Tweed, the mother of his two children. But it's here in his office that the KISS frontman and king of the rock-'n'-roll world becomes king of the business world.

Today, Gene's working out deals for KISS lunch boxes, sneakers and a new hardcover book—and working them out fast. He returns four calls, sends two faxes, then types and mails a letter. Elapsed time: less than four minutes. "I do it all myself," Simmons says in measured tones *far* too quiet for a man who spits fire and drools blood for a living. "Because if it's good, I want all the credit. And if it's bad, I want somebody to blame."

These new goodies will eventually get added to Simmons' office, already overflowing with KISS product spanning the band's 25-year history. Japanese KISS fan magazines, KISS commemorative coins and 1970s KISS Mego dolls. Music? It takes a back seat to memorabilia, but it's still there. Two guitars rest on stands in a corner. An electric piano—with blank sheet music Simmons is composing on—occupies the center of the room.

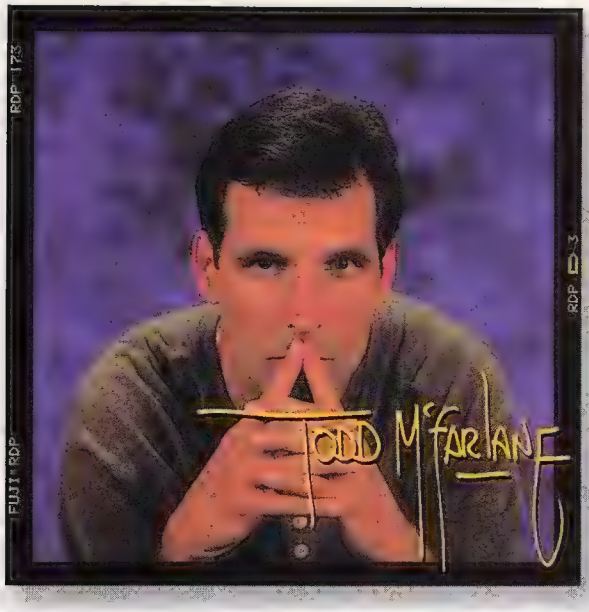
Yes, Simmons has many business partners. Todd McFarlane is one. The creator of Spawn is producing the wickedly successful *KISS: The Psycho Circus* comic and KISS action figures. And Gene? He owns *all* the original art from the comic and the figures' design sketches. "I buy nothing," he coolly states. "You wanna do a comic with me? I get the art. It's part of the deal."

Finally, a Ford Explorer pulls up the driveway. Simmons calmly strides out of the office, looking cool in 90-degree California heat despite his signature leather pants. McFarlane bounces out of the car wearing a baseball hat (backwards) and the free T-shirt he got for subscribing to *ESPN The Magazine*. The two greet one another with warm smiles. Then Gene shows Todd his latest coup: KISS on the cover of *The Hollywood Reporter*, with a story about the band starring in "Detroit Rock City," an upcoming New Line Cinema release.

"You mean KISS gets ink sometimes?" McFarlane says with mock amazement. "You wanna get more ink? Talk to me, I'll show you how. I got these *Wizard* guys out here, didn't I?"

OPENING IMAGE © 1998 TODD McFARLANE PRODUCTIONS

KID STUFF Simmons gives Todd almost complete control over KISS toys (like The Demon figure, shown) and comics.



VITAL STATS

NAME: Todd McFarlane
OCCUPATION: Comic writer/artist, toy designer, movie and TV producer, partial owner of a pro hockey team
BORN: March 16, 1961, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada
BASE OF OPERATIONS: A loft above his garage in Phoenix, Ariz.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Rose to prominence as a writer and artist on Marvel's Spider-Man titles, 1987-1991; co-founded Image Comics and launched *Spawn*, 1992; started McFarlane Toys, 1994; saw production of a "Spawn" movie and an HBO animated series, 1997; bought part of the NHL's Edmonton Oilers, 1998.
FAVORITE KISS MAKEUP: "I'm not saying it just because Gene's here, but it's Gene's. I like the dark stuff. I like the monster stuff, and he's got the monster face. No offense."

NAME: Gene Simmons
OCCUPATION: Singer, bassist, actor, businessman
BORN: August 26, 1949, in Haifa, Israel
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Offices in Beverly Hills, Calif., and New York City
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: More than 25 years singing and playing bass with KISS, selling more than 100 million albums worldwide; feature film acting roles including "KISS Meets the Phantom of the Park" (1978) and "Runaway" (1984); KISS merchandising and licensing deals with hundreds of manufacturers.
FAVORITE COMIC HERO: "The Silver Surfer. He was initially a villain in concept in that he's the herald of Galactus. But there's such a great, tragic back-story to him. And as soon as he gets stranded on Earth, he becomes Heinlein's 'Stranger in a Strange Land.' He can see all the foolishness of humanity because he's one step removed from humanity."

WIZARD: Gene and Todd, describe your relationship. Are you friends or business associates?

GENE: I would say lovers. We've got a lot in common. We're both foreigners, for one thing…

TODD: …doing well in the American dream, so we have that bond.

GENE: He's from Canada and I'm from Israel.

TODD: We never put a label on our relationship. We do what we do. Part of it's business, part of it's just talking on the phone about stupid stuff. Most business guys probably don't talk about dumb stuff. [*Laughs*] Yeah, so put it somewhere between business associates and lovers.

GENE: I'll tell you something. I respect this guy [*points to McFarlane*]. I tracked *him* down. I thought that this was a guy smart enough to figure out that even though he was doing well at Marvel, maybe he should do it for himself. We talked on the phone and arranged to meet after a KISS concert in Phoenix. We were basically showing off for each other. So I made sure that I was surrounded by beautiful women…

TODD [*laughing*]**:** Sisters! They're all your sisters, cousins and nieces, right? That's what you always say…

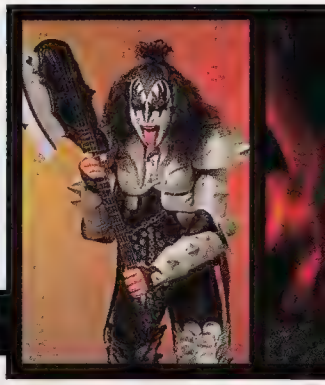
GENE [*smiling*]**:** Right. And there was a learning curve. Todd had to learn a little bit about KISS to see that we were cooler than The Cure. Now I'm a big fan of The Cure, but that doesn't mean you want to buy them as a comic book. Musically, we may suck. But in merchandising, we'll bury any band. No problem.

Todd, you needed KISS education?

TODD: When I was growing up I had a younger brother and an older brother who were fanatics. So I was, like, a KISS fan by association. I could probably give you their five greatest hits and a few album titles, but I'm not one of those guys who knows every song lyric. But anybody who's been around 25 years in the entertainment business, I'm a fan of. I mean, 25 years! That's good enough.

Gene, there are lots of comic publishers. There are worldwide giant toy manufacturers such as Mattel and Hasbro. Why go with McFarlane?

GENE: Todd works much in the same way KISS works. The fewer hands that touch your stuff, the less diluted the product will be and the more profit there will be. But if you want that, you've got to do more work. Todd rolls up his sleeves and does the work—his own comic, his own action figures. I wanted non-diluted quality. I wanted someone with the passion to go out there and do some damage.



COVER SONG Simmons' one beef with the comic? He wants to make the covers better.

"I'm not shy, so I'll tell you: KISS fans love it. Comic fans love it. It's good. But the 'Psycho Circus' magazine will outsell the comic book 2-to-1."

—GENE SIMMONS on the KISS comic

But why get away from Marvel? You had a previous relationship there.

GENE: Marvel did the original KISS books in the '70s. They wanted to do more, and I wanted to prove that our fans would buy a $10 book—a magazine with articles, art, stories and so on. So I got Marvel to do *KISSNation*, which had a KISS/X-Men story in it. We did one issue, and Marvel started going down in financial trouble. They could never refill orders. And they just went to the direct market. My contract said these must go out on newsstands, or I'm out of the deal. So I called Marvel and said, "You messed up, you owe me some money, this never went to newsstand, send me all the original art, I want that book to revert to me and I want to be able to republish it any way I want." And they did. They stepped up at the end. So at least we parted friends, but Marvel was a mess at this point.

TODD: But Gene's efficient.

GENE: Well *I* showed up for the interview on time.

How'd the action figures with Todd come about?

GENE: At some point [*points to McFarlane*], I saw that you were going to go for the book. Then I knew that you would go for the toys—Sorry!—action figures. Must say "action figures." I believe in one-stop shopping. If I like what Todd does in one area, and he seems to do a good job in another area, then I've got no reason to beat somebody else up. Ultimately, I went with Todd for no other reason than his stuff was just better. The comic was better. The art was so much more vivid. The toys just *looked* better. I know I'll get quality.

TODD: For my part, I believe there are some properties that the big guys just don't "get." I know Kenner would've done pretty decent for KISS. But big toy companies make 27 million units and put it out next to Barbie. I felt that KISS—comics and toys—had to be in Spencer's and Virgin Records and Suncoast [Motion] Pictures. So we created all those accounts right when we got the KISS license. The big companies? I believe they'd still be sending memos around. The KISS Army [KISS' fan club] guy might not travel down the toy aisle. I "get" KISS in terms of what it means to these people a lot better than some guy in a three-piece suit working for Mattel or Marvel.

Gene, what's your involvement in creation and approval? Do they fax plots or art over to you?

GENE: Absolutely not. I have ultimate authority, but all I'll do is pick up the phone once in a while and give Todd direction. For instance, I had a thought a couple of issues back that the letters column didn't have graphics or artwork. So I sent some photos and artwork to use.

Usually I'm all over anything that has KISS on it. Not a single project happens and not a check is signed without my say. But the only thing I could do to these books is ruin them, because they're so damn good. All I want now is to make the covers a little better.

TODD [*grabs tape recorder as if to talk to* KISS: TPC *artist Angel Medina*]**:** Angel, don't take this personal! He just wants them more in-your-face! We'll talk later!

So you've got faith in Todd then?

GENE: Yeah. It started with the initial conversation when Todd asked what the band was going to do. I said that our next live show was going to have a real circus vibe to it, but a circus in "The Twilight Zone." So that started the ball rolling. And Todd *understood*. He went, "I like that. I like a ringmaster. I like the stilt man. Let's take those guys and make them characters." As long as we've got the right

PHOTO: TODD MCFARLANE © PAUL SCHRIALDI, GENE SIMMONS OUT OF MAKE-UP © CATHERINE MCGANN / OUTLINE, PAGE 60 © GLEN LAFERMAN PHOTO, PAGE 63 © FRANK MICELOTTA

'PSYCHO' ANALYSIS

Brian Holguin has a promise.

"Trust me," says the writer of *KISS: The Psycho Circus*. "This ain't no 'Josie and the Pussycats' thing where the band solves a crazy caper and gets to the arena just in time for the show."

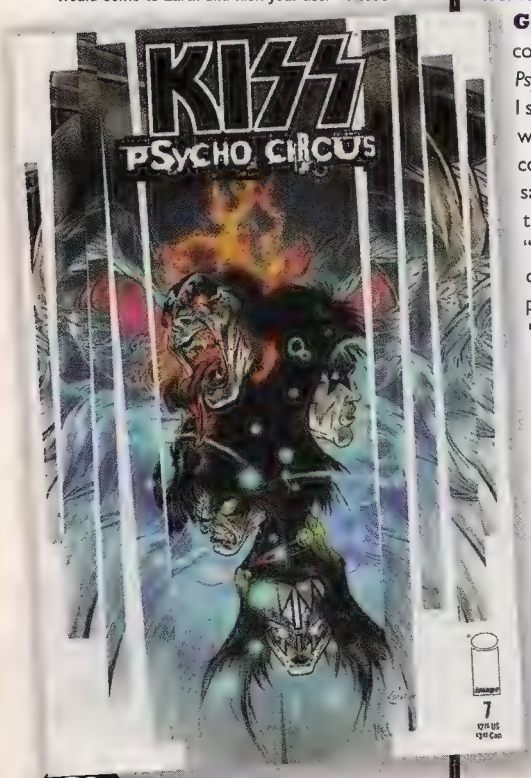
Not at all. In fact, KISS members don't even appear as *themselves* in the comic. Instead, the "Four-Who-Are-One" are elementals of great power, each of whom represents an aspect of, well, life.

"Peter is the Cat," Holguin explains. "So he represents nature. Ace is the Star, who represents the cosmos. Paul is the Heart, so he is emotion. And Gene is the Demon," according to Holguin, "who represents destruction, which can lead to new creation."

The KISS icons interact with people through a traveling circus. "People from every walk of life will enter the circus," Holguin says. But all are outcasts in some way. "Some are good, like an artist who has no one to understand his vision. Some are bad. We've had some criminals visit."

Either way, everyone confronts their inner selves, and gets rewarded or punished in kind. The Four-Who-Are-One helped a child escape an abusive father in an early story. And an assassin met his end after a trip to the circus in another. "KISS is the hook," Holguin admits. "But readers connect with the real-life, flesh-and-blood stories of the real people."

Even though the focus is the people who come to the circus, KISS still plays an active role. Holguin compares them to The Endless, godlike yet aloof beings who populated Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*. "They're actually a lot like The Endless," Holguin says. "That is, if The Endless would come to Earth and kick your ass." ■ JM



vibe, it's all good. After that, I have no interest in checking over page 14 of the next issue. Why would I do that? It would only hold things up. And I've been very happy so far.

TODD: I remember with clear recollection that Gene said you have to do two things right: One is the make-up, because the make-up *is* KISS. And two is platforms. We've got to be in platform shoes. After that—literally—from the neck down to the ankles, there was no definitive. [*Turns to Simmons*] I remember you saying it. I took it as gospel when you said that.

I've dealt with outsiders before and KISS is the easiest piece of business I've had to deal with. We talked over the concept. I knew what Gene wanted to do with this "Psycho Circus."

The book is a commercial success. But do you think it sells because of the KISS name or because it's a good comic?

TODD: I think that the name is so strong that you're going to get impulse buyers and KISS fans right away. That's where the strength lies. But like anything, you get them once on name, and then you have to deliver. I think people are reading it for the eighth or ninth month in a row now. I think they feel they're getting their money's worth.

GENE: I'm not shy, so I'll tell you: KISS fans love it. Comic fans love it. It's good. But the *Psycho Circus* magazine will outsell the comic book 2-to-1.

What magazine?

GENE: Since I can't be humble in any conversation—and for the record—the *Psycho Circus* magazine idea started when I spoke of my feelings to Todd. Initially when we talked—even before the comic—I wanted to do a magazine. He said, "No, I want to do a comic like this." I told him I respected that. I said, "Let's do it that way then, and build credibility. Then when the comic goes places, let's do a magazine."

TODD: I'm not afraid of comic books. I'm actually quite proud of them. It's just that I'm realistic, so I know that society has a knee-jerk reaction and a stereotype about comics. They think they're for 8-year-olds. So I want to create a magazine that has KISS comic stuff in it, but also editorial stuff and photos and photo covers so it looks like a music magazine.

As far as comic content of the magazine goes, is it all reprint stuff? Anything new?

TODD: It's like the equivalent of reprinting in trade paperback. But I'm bringing it out to a whole new audience. I'm bringing it to the public now. So, hopefully, this will be fresh material to them, especially if you mix it up with a ton of articles, photos and behind-the-scenes information and blah, blah, blah.

When does the first issue of the magazine hit? Is it an ongoing thing?

TODD: It will be a regular thing, and the level of readership will dictate how often it comes out. We're looking at monthly or bimonthly. [*To Gene*] I think October 31 will be the first day it's sold, right?

GENE: Yes. Halloween. When we open the "Psycho Circus" tour at Dodger Stadium.

Now Todd, I understand you're redesigning some costumes and so on for the upcoming tour.

TODD: People think I'm doing this whole tour for him. But that's not how it is. Gene came up with the concept for "KISS: The Psycho Circus." So, is there gonna be stuff in the "Psycho Circus" tour that meshes with the *Psycho Circus* comic? Well, yeah. That's only natural. Have I been hired to draw new costumes? No. Have I designed his stage? No. I've got complete confidence in him. Gene, since you give me your confidence in the comic, I'm gonna give you my confidence in the concerts! [*Both laugh*]

GENE: There will be stuff that meshes. There won't be any opening acts, but during what would be the opening act slot, for two hours or so, there will be bizarre [things] going on out in the audience. We're going to have a stilt man out there with lasers popping out of his top hat. We'll have a carnival barker. We'll have guys dressed up in bizarre outfits with chain saws that shoot CO_2 out. We'll have guys flying above your heads on piano wire. It will have some of the vibe felt in the *Psycho Circus* comic. You know, it's funny. When KISS first came out, our biggest criticism was probably our biggest compliment as well—some critics said, "They're just comic book musicians." Well, yeah! That's right! We're bigger than just music. And it works.

You seem to get along. Do you two disagree on anything? Gene, do you ever take a look at the figures and go, "That sucks!"

GENE: The only figures we've ever had a disagreement on are financial figures [*both laugh*].

For the sake of argument, if push comes to shove on an issue where there's no middle ground, who pushes?

OH WELL Simmons didn't love the "Spawn" flick and Todd wasn't a big KISS fan.

GENE [*raises his index finger*]**:** Me. If it's KISS and I don't want to do it, it's not gonna happen.

TODD: He's right. He's the client, so I gotta keep him happy. Otherwise he's not gonna keep giving me contracts.

Obviously, *Spawn* and *KISS: The Psycho Circus* are very popular comics. Any plans for character crossovers?

TODD: Not now. When the time is right and I've got a story that makes sense, then I'll probably get on the phone and call Gene. Then he can either add his two cents, or he can say, "I hate it," and it's dead. But I could see it. I can maybe do something in *Spawn* with Gene's character, The Demon, and do a story that catapults to the *KISS* comic.

Gene, do you read *Spawn*?

GENE: I read it consistently. I like that it has a singular point of view I don't see anywhere else, and I like it because it's dark. And dark is always cooler than light. Girls look better in the dark. Things happen at night. Things go bump in the night. It creates this dark vibe. It's not the first comic that's done it, but it's done it consistently.

Any other comics you enjoy?

GENE: There are very few books that really hold my attention. I was curious enough to pick up the Rob Liefeld–Jim Lee "Heroes Reborn" stuff from Marvel. I feel I'm missing the sense of wonder you have as a kid. I wanted to *be* these superheroes as a kid. But now, I've surpassed those guys. I am on stage. I do fly through the air and all that. But I *haven't* died and come back to wreak havoc in this world like Spawn has.

Every so often, *Witchblade* and *The Darkness* are interesting, but I won't pick up every one. I'll go and scan. I've picked up a few issues. The Jeph Loeb/Tim Sale Batman "Halloween" books are always brave stuff.

Have you seen the "Spawn" movie? What did you think of it?

GENE: I liked it. I thought it could've been better. The special effects were good. But a movie is also about the casting. I never bought Michael Jai White as Spawn. I didn't quite buy Martin Sheen. I would've gone for an all-unknown cast.

TODD [*sarcastically*]**:** That's why we gotta do a sequel. I'm not going to my grave knowing that I have not impressed the master.

Why wasn't KISS on the "Spawn" soundtrack?

GENE: Not my call. I went to New Line. I had a song that I thought was perfect called "Hate." The chorus line goes, "Hate/Hate is what I am/Because underneath this heart/There beats the heart of man." I thought that was very Spawn-like. But the producers misunderstood. They thought I wanted a million dollars for one song on the soundtrack. Not true at all.

Are there plans to incorporate Spawn into the upcoming concert tour?

GENE: No. But maybe that's an idea for future tours.

TODD [*cackling loudly*]**:** I asked him for a million bucks for one character and he turned me down! [*Both laugh*]

You two seem to get along well. I think maybe you are more friends than business partners.

TODD: Well, in the big picture, he doesn't *need* me for two seconds. He's got KISS! And I really don't need him. I've got Spawn. We've got our own lives. We don't have to do everything together, but there's a couple of things that we choose to do together.

GENE: I really admire Todd. I like that he has his own point of view about what he wants to do and how he wants to do it. If you're right in what you want to do, and it works, then that's all you need. So I admire that. I've got to admire something about him. He's not good-looking enough to hang around with otherwise.

Jim McLauchlin auditioned to be part of the Psycho Circus, but was told they had enough flame-jugglin', dwarf-tossin' roustabouts already.

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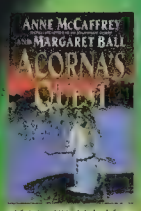

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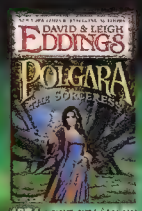

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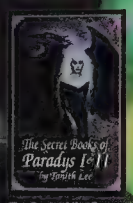

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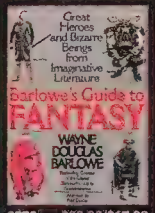
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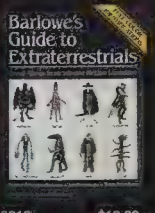
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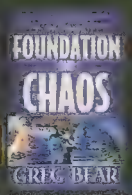
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And that's what we're looking at here: the baddest of the bad, the vilest of vile...the 10 most dangerous villains in all of comics.

Our criteria are simple. Just unadulterated villains. No anti-heroes like Punisher or Lobo. No cosmic forces or gods of a higher order like Mephisto, Galactus or Darkseid.

Oh, and one other thing. These are do-or-die, no-holds-barred melees, each baddie dishing out everything they've got to survive.

And if you thought seeing these guys fighting heroes was rough, wait'll you see what they do to each other. So let's not waste any time and see who made our wanted list...

10 BULLSEYE

HIS DEAL: The world is his arsenal. A master of stealth and hand-to-hand combat, what makes the assassin-for-hire Bullseye so dangerous are his unbreakable adamantium spine and almost-inhuman marksmanship ability. Not only does the world's most dangerous marksman know exactly where to hit you to kill you, he can kill you with anything: gun, knife, a CD...*everything* becomes a weapon in his hands.
WHY HE'S #10: As dangerous as Bullseye is, he's still just an "ordinary" guy (in a superhero universe anyway) who hunts other ordinary guys. In a world populated by the movers and shakers on this list, even Bullseye's best shot would still be his last.

GET THE POINT? Bullseye's plenty deadly, but how would he fare in this crowd?

BY THE WIZARD STAFF

9 SABRETOOTH

HIS DEAL: He not only knows how to kill you...he wants to. Born a mutant, the bloodthirsty Victor Creed possesses inhuman-level senses, a fast-acting healing factor, an unbreakable adamantium-laced skeleton and CIA combat training. The 'Tooth might as well be a wild animal.

WHY HE'S #9: This icy killer's quick-healing factor and unbreakable skeleton place him squarely in the supervillain elite. But Sabretooth is waaay overconfident and doesn't care how lethal a deathtrap he's walking into. And he *has* to walk into it, simply because in order for Sabretooth to damage his opponent, he must be near him to do so.

VS. BULLSEYE: Bullseye is bound to get the first few shots in because of his long-range abilities, but it doesn't matter. Absorbing blow after blow, the regenerating 'Tooth needs only to score a few hits to show Bullseye he's dead meat.

'TOOTH DECAY Sabretooth's gotta be close to his prey to hit it, which ain't always a good thing.

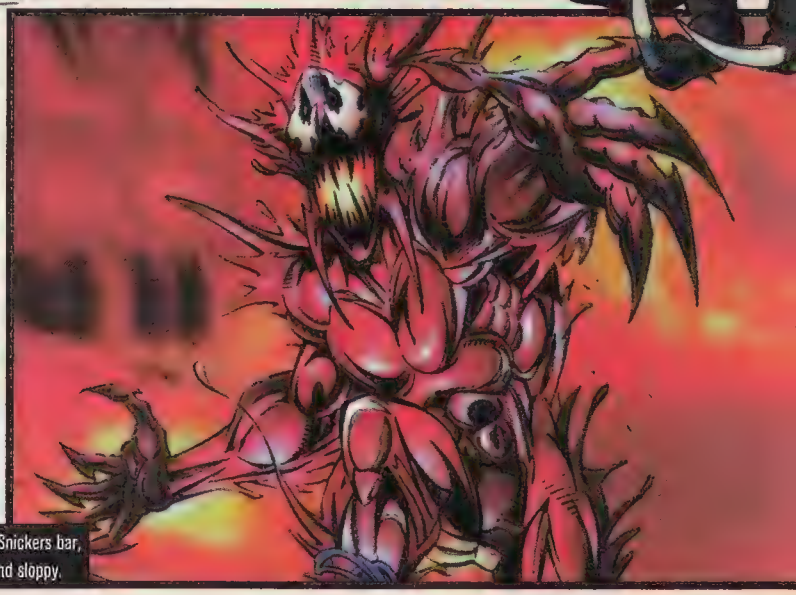
8 CARNAGE

HIS DEAL: He's insanity given flesh. While in prison, the mentally unbalanced Cletus Kasady came into contact with an alien symbiote that bonded to him, creating the creature known as Carnage. Now superhumanly strong, near-invulnerable and capable of morphing his body into any shape, Carnage has the means to do what he's always dreamed of: kill...everything.

WHY HE'S #8: He's totally unpredictable with his style of killing. But his erratic thinking makes him unpredictable even to himself, causing sloppy and haphazard planning. Carnage is also not invulnerable; a swift kick to the head (if you can somehow separate the symbiote from him) and he's KOed. His one fear? Sound waves, which will squash that symbiote right offa his body.

VS. BULLSEYE: Bullseye's long-range prowess does him no good here, 'cause the faster, stronger Carnage can outshoot 'im and outreach 'im. Bullseye's lucky if he gets a shot off at all.

VS. SABRETOOTH: Get a mop 'cause this fight's gonna leave a stain. Welcoming Sabretooth's savage brutality, Carnage would take some damage from the mutant berserker. But compared to Carnage's speed, strength and shapeshifting ability, the 'Tooth is just outmatched.



LETHAL LOON He's nuttier than a Snickers bar, which makes him unpredictable...and sloppy.

7 JOKER

HIS DEAL: He's the world's only sane madman. Driven to insanity after the accidental death of his wife and a botched burglary attempt, the man known only as Joker sees the entire world as one big joke. Desperate to get the rest of the world in on the gag, the Joker stages elaborate pranks and deathtraps to not only murder his foes, but to break their sanity as well.

WHY HE'S #7: He terrifies even Batman. His total disregard for human life makes him the ultimate wild card and a difficult foe. Coldly calculating, able to turn any chain of events to his advantage and always ready with a "plan B," the Joker's biggest weakness is his frailty. Placed in a drawn-out physical situation, he's a dead man.

VS. BULLSEYE: Bullseye would never know what hit him. Lured into one of the Joker's insane deathtraps, the hitman would scoff at the laughing fish, musical jack-in-the-boxes and assorted "toys"...until one of those toys puts a bullet in his head.

VS. SABRETOOTH: Same deal as Bullseye, though Sabretooth's deathtrap would be more nasty to overcome that pesky healing factor.

VS. CARNAGE: Carnage may be more powerful than Joker, but the symbiote madman lacks the clown prince's cunning mind. Carnage would fall hook, line and sinker for one of the Joker's mind-bending traps.

CLOWN PRINCE Joker is the ultimate wild card, scaring even Batman. Just hope the fight doesn't get physical.

6 RA'S AL GHUL

HIS DEAL: He's the evil Batman. Ra's al Ghul ("The Demon's Head") is a multi-billionaire genius whose willpower and vision are second to none. A global terrorist, this megalomaniac wants to "purify" the world through mass genocide. He'll then rule Earth with his chosen few as its sole inhabitants. Aside from being a superb hand-to-hand combatant, his greatest asset is the Lazarus Pit, a chemical-laden pool that a near-death Ra's uses to extend his lifespan by immersing himself into it.

WHY HE'S #6: Ra's is tough, but he sure does use that there Lazarus Pit quite a bit. (Read: He gets beaten up. A LOT.) Ra's is more comfortable being a behind-the-scenes player who feels it's almost beneath him to fight.

VS. BULLSEYE: If he wanted Bullseye dead, all he would do is "hire" the assassin, bring him to his secluded fortress and have a hundred henchmen pound the hitman to death. Bullseye is beneath Ra's attention.

VS. SABRETOOTH: Curious to see if Sabretooth's mutant-healing factor is superior to the Lazarus Pit, Ra's would again "hire" the sometime-assassin Sabretooth and bring him to his fortress. Once there, Sabretooth would be heavily drugged and experimented on by Ra's scientists and–after learning all they can from his healing factor–Sabretooth is put to sleep by Ra's' goons. Again, Sabretooth is beneath Ra's' personal touch.

VS. CARNAGE: Studying Carnage and learning of his weakness for sonics, Ra's would dispatch his men to capture Kasady and bring him in. Keeping him under sedation and learning all there is to know about the symbiote, Kasady would be deemed expendable, then killed, while the symbiote is given to a host who's more faithful to Ra's. And as before, Ra's would not soil his hands on Carnage.

VS. JOKER: Finally...a face-to-face confrontation. Knowing of Batman's respect, almost fear, for the Joker, Ra's would want to see such a man firsthand. Over dinner, the two would sit and Ra's would learn as much as he could from the Joker...which wouldn't be much. Stymied by the Joker's insanity, Ra's would order him executed...which is when the Joker blindsides Ra's, wounding "The Demon's Head." Bleeding and incensed at the Joker's audacity, Ra's would wave off his guards, overpower the Joker and kill him with his bare hands.

WHY IS THIS MAN SMILING? He wants to kill you. 'Cause you're impure, that's why.

5 DOOMSDAY

HIS DEAL: He is rage given form. The creature known as Doomsday was created to be the ultimate weapon. An unthinking, super-strong and near-invulnerable force of nature, Doomsday, once he's defeated (or killed!), returns immune to what beat him.

WHY HE'S #5: He's a relentless, mindless killing machine who separates the beguiling bad guys from the big boys on this list. Heck, Superman had to die to put this monstrosity down. But Doomsday's inability to make decisions during battle is a major liability–'cause from here on in, he's facing guys who will outsmart most anyone.

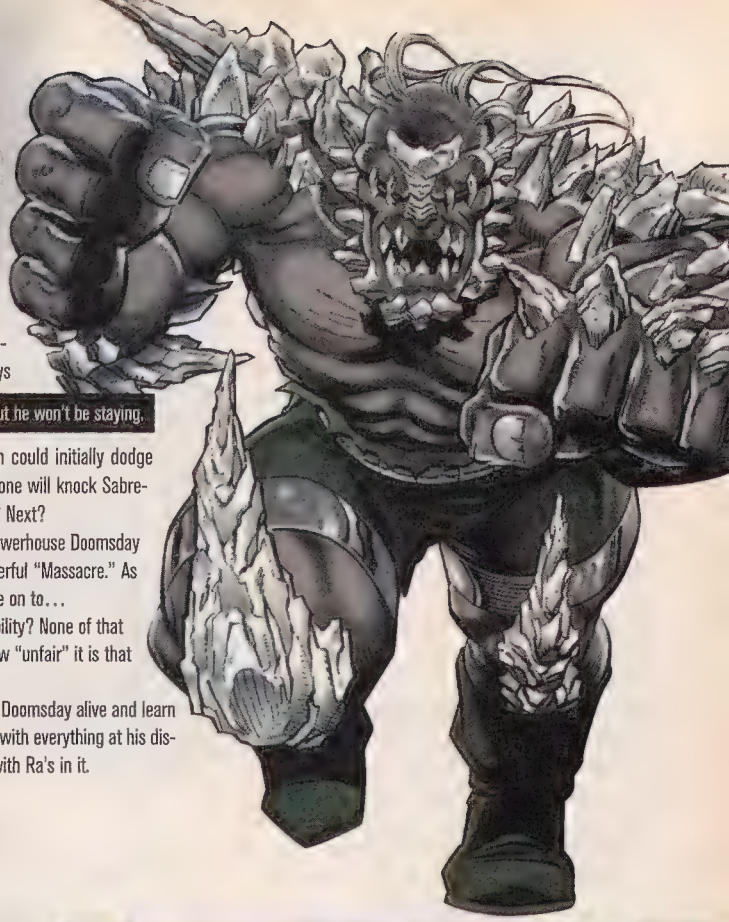
VS. BULLSEYE: *SQUISH!* Next?

VS. SABRETOOTH: Faster and more agile than Bullseye, Sabretooth could initially dodge Doomsday's attacks, but eventually the behemoth would land a blow. And one will knock Sabretooth enough for Doomsie to land another...and another...and *SQUISH!* Next?

VS. CARNAGE: Screw the fight. Once the symbiote sees what kind of powerhouse Doomsday is, it's ditching Kasady and jumps to the D-Man, creating the insanely powerful "Massacre." As Kasady screams and whines about losing the symbiote, *SQUISH!* We move on to...

VS. JOKER: Elaborate deathtraps? Mind games? Trademark unpredictability? None of that could even scratch Doomsday. And once the Joker comes out and yells how "unfair" it is that Doomsday just ruined his deathtrap, *SQUISH!* Next?

VS. RA'S AL GHUL: Ra's would make the mistake of trying to capture Doomsday alive and learn of a way to bend the monster to his will. Uh-uh. As intelligent as Ra's is and with everything at his disposal, Doomsday would send Ra's to the Lazarus Pit, then destroy the Pit with Ra's in it.



DOOMSDAY IS COMING! But he won't be staying.

4 THANOS

HIS DEAL: He's in love with death. This universal conqueror worships the embodiment of Death so much that he wants to kill more people in the universe than anyone else, just to appease her. Aside from being extraordinarily clever (he once outsmarted a cadre of cosmic beings called the Elders of the Universe), this alien can channel cosmic energy through his gauntlets, he's pretty near invulnerable and he's super-strong (Thanos once took on Thor and Thing at the same time...and held his own).

WHY HE'S #4: Check this out: When he gained omnipotence (!), Thanos not only wiped out every major Marvel superhero and half the universe's population, but he also successfully conquered the entire universe. Pretty impressive, yessiree. But it has been established that Thanos will subconsciously set in motion his own undoing (he knows he is ultimately unworthy of Death's affections), which happened when he lost his omnipotence and revived the then-dead universal population.

VS. BULLSEYE: The only way Bullseye survives past five seconds is if Thanos deems him beneath his notice. Which he is.

VS. SABRETOOTH: Remember when Wolverine's flesh was sizzled off his adamantium skeleton in the classic "Days of Future Past" storyline from *Uncanny X-Men* #142? This fight would give you a serious case of déjà vu.

VS. CARNAGE: Thanos would intrigue Carnage by telling him they can rule the universe together. That is, until Carnage is sucked into some intricate sonic contraption, his suit pounded down to a molecular scale with Kasady's skeleton ground to powder.

VS. JOKER: Any deathtrap built by Joker was done and improved upon a thousand times over by Thanos in his childhood. So there's no getting caught off-guard by the pasty prankster.

VS. RA'S AL GHUL: Ra's thinks global, Thanos thinks *universal.* While the two of them would enjoy discussing philosophies, once Thanos has learned all he wishes to know, Ra's and his goons are quickly dispatched and the secrets of the Lazarus Pit would fall into the hands of Thanos.

VS. DOOMSDAY: Though intrigued by the deadly potential of the creature, Thanos would quickly see Doomsday as more of a danger than an asset. After a half-dozen misfires to get rid of Doomsday, Thanos would eventually drop Doomsday into a black hole and–while it wouldn't kill Doomsday–it would just make him someone else's problem.

DEATH WISH Thanos will get his soon enough, but he'll take some with him.

3 MAGNETO

HIS DEAL: The Malcolm X of mutants. A Nazi concentration camp survivor, Erik Lehnsherr's agenda demands that mutants–known as "homo superior"–must fight to co-exist with humans. He is the master of magnetism, which includes dominance over any metallic object, electromagnetic pulses/waves and even the iron in a person's bloodstream. As an example of his might, he once sank a fully manned Russian nuclear sub; there were no survivors.

WHY HE'S #3: For his all of his earth-shaking might, Magneto has a conscience. He will not kill if a) it doesn't serve his mutant agenda, or b) he can walk away from a life-threatening situation.

VS. BULLSEYE: There's not much the world's greatest assassin could do when hundreds of razor-sharp shards of metal come hurtling at him or a magnetic force-bubble cuts off his air supply. Magneto could kill him so many different ways, this is a non-fight.

VS. SABRETOOTH: Would Maggie spare a fellow mutant? Well, seeing how 'Tooth has killed lotsa innocent mutants, probably not. He'd just yank the adamantium out of him like he did to Wolverine, but this time there'd be no Jean Grey around to save him.

VS. CARNAGE: Boy, that magnetic force-bubble is handy. Trapping Carnage inside it, Magneto would just magnetically thrust him at the speed of sound, creating a sonic boom, leaving a Carnage cadaver.

VS. JOKER: Losing his temper over the Joker's mind games, Magneto would go on a verbal tirade about the horrors he's already endured at the hands of small-minded humans...then come to his senses and realize he had murdered the Joker already.

VS. RA'S AL GHUL: Magneto would see a lot of himself in Ra's, but would not see eye-to-eye with his purification plan (too many mutants would die). Magneto would bring Ra's' fortress down around his ears and bury the Lazarus Pit under hundreds of tons of debris.

VS. DOOMSDAY: No chances taken here. Once Doomsday stuns Magneto by breaking out of a force-bubble, the master of magnetism would wrap him in scrap metal and shoot him out into orbit. Not very creative, but it–like Thanos' solution–makes Doomsday someone else's headache.

VS. THANOS: Magneto wouldn't mess around with Thanos. If given a second to outsmart Magneto, Thanos would do it. Magneto would swiftly take the fight outta Thanos by creating an electro-magnetic pulse to take out anything energy-based (i.e., Thanos' gauntlets and any high-tech cannons he keeps lying around his kitchen). All Thanos has left is his noggin, but against Magneto's swift strike, he won't have time to rely on it.

MASTER BLASTER Magneto's only enemy is his own conscience.

2 LEX LUTHOR

LEX WEARS KHAKIS And he does just about anything else he wants...

HIS DEAL: He owns the DC Universe. If anything bad goes on there, odds are Lex Luthor had something to do with it. A self-made billionaire, this super-genius uses his talents and money to literally make him King of the World. His company, LexCorp, has products in every household. His satellites circle the globe. His weapons supply the military. Ruining lives is but a hobby of his.

WHY HE'S #2: He's the smartest man in the DC Universe. Luthor will outsmart you and out-gun you...and no one would ever know Luthor was behind it. His one flaw is his sheer arrogance; Luthor will stop at nothing to be the big shot, even if there's a bigger shot around (like, say, Superman). But when an opponent confronts Lex–if it ever got that far–it would likely result in even greater destruction, 'cause if Lex has to die he'll try to take his opponent with him.

VS. BULLSEYE: Luthor would hire Bullseye to murder someone and when Bullseye went to the appointed place, BAMMO!, a bomb ensures the only thing left of Bullseye is his adamantium spine, which Luthor would use in his schemes to destroy Superman.

VS. SABRETOOTH: Luthor would promise Sabretooth aid in destroying Wolverine, and then overpower 'Tooth with robot goons, sedate him...and do something far worse than kill him. He'd make him a lab experiment for his top scientists, turning Sabretooth into a mindless drone for use against Superman.

VS. CARNAGE: Luthor's no dope. He'd simply know that Carnage is vulnerable to sonics, so when Luthor breaks Kasady out of jail, he'd bombard him with sonics, separate the symbiote from the human host, kill Kasady and then bring the symbiote back to the lab to see if it could be used to help him destroy–yep–Superman.

VS. JOKER: Striking where the Joker would be the most vulnerable, Luthor would merely use his influence to ensure that while the Joker was serving one of his terms at Arkham Asylum, some papers would "appear" authorizing his lobotomy.

VS. RA'S AL GHUL: Luthor simply has more resources to rid the world of al Ghul. Ra's might have nuclear bombs, but Luthor has nuclear *satellites*. Luthor'd bomb Ra's' secret Asian camp back into the Stone Age before he even knew what hit him (but not before Luthor's men had swiped samples of the Lazarus Pit).

VS. DOOMSDAY: If Superman didn't stop Doomsday the first time around, Luthor eventually would have found a way. How? By providing the transport contraption to bring all the mega-powerful characters in the DCU together for an all-out slugfest–one that Luthor would fix so that when the surviving heroes finally vanquished Doomsday, they'd be swept under the rug as well, leaving Luthor unchallenged in the DCU.

VS. THANOS: Thanos is a master manipulator. So is Luthor. But the human Luthor has no such subconscious failure-mechanism to stop his plans from following through. With Thanos on the brink of victory, he ultimately beats himself, leaving a confused Luthor the true victor.

VS. MAGNETO: Masquerading as a mutant and gaining Magneto's trust, Luthor would "join forces" with him...only to slip him poisons. Then Luthor exits the room and an onslaught of weapons–made of unbreakable polymers and plastics–pummels the weakened master of magnetism. The last thing Magneto would see is a built-in screen on one of the weapons with a message: Luthor telling the mutant that it will be the last time one of "his kind" will threaten the human lives that belong to *Luthor.*

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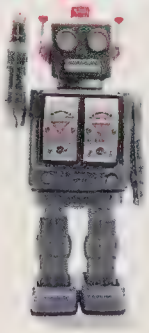

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WICKED WANNABES

A LOOK AT WHO DIDN'T MAKE THE LIST...AND WHY

APOCALYPSE This would-be world conqueror has taken 80,000 years to do... nothing. Way to go, blue-lips.

BARON ZEMO Close–and the last year has seen this guy kick ass–but he's still gotta live down the decades of mediocrity he's lived before he makes the supervillain elite.

BRAINIAC Regardless of what the name might imply, this cheesy serial villain has done so much of nothing we wonder how he made THIS backup list.

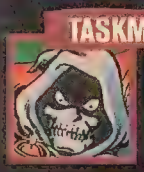
GREEN GOBLIN Fun to watch fly around and throw pumpkins, but not a heavyweight.

JUGGERNAUT Great villain, but it was either him or Doomsday, and Doomsday would mop the floor with him.

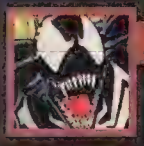
KINGPIN A poor man's Lex Luthor, only fatter.

PROMETHEUS He takes out Superman, Batman and the JLA...and what takes him out? A kick to the 'nads by Catwoman. Next time wear a cup, pal.

RED SKULL He's a shadow being that currently terrorizes beachcombers. Uhh, what more needs to be said?



TASKMASTER He's interested in training hired-muscle and making some dough, not in duking it out. Given the opportunity, he'll run from any fight.



VENOM Much cooler than Carnage, but nowhere near as tough or dangerous.

1 DR. DOOM

HIS DEAL: He's the most dangerous man alive in *any* comic universe. Monarch of the European nation of Latveria, Victor Von Doom is a scientific ultra-genius, and there's not a contraption he can't build. His nuclear-powered suit of armor. Robotic Doombots, capable of mass destruction. A *time machine*. On top of that, Vic's even cheated death by transferring his mind into another's right before his body was destroyed. Oh, and besides his extraordinary scientific skills, he's also the second-best sorcerer on Earth and next in line for the title of Sorcerer Supreme (currently held by Dr. Strange).

WHY HE'S #1: Sheesh, with a résumé like that, it's no wonder. Only his vanity and arrogance has deterred him from his goals a couple times. Doom has only known setbacks, never defeat.

VS. BULLSEYE: Bullseye, waaay out of his league, would try to talk his way outta fighting Doom. Too late.

VS. SABRETOOTH: As powerful as Sabretooth is, he's no match for Doom's armor. Though it might not look like much, Doom's suit is on par with Iron Man's. So while 'Tooth might get the first few shots in, Doom can take those AND a whole lot more. It's Sabretooth who can't take what Doom can dish out.

VS. CARNAGE: Doom keeps himself up to date with EVERY adversary on the planet, so Carnage is no one to lose sleep over. While Carnage could sneak up on Doom and score a few nasty hits, one well-placed sonic blast from Doom's armor sees this battle end.

VS. JOKER: Doom would have little patience with him. While the Joker would do his best to unnerve Doom, Vic would just walk through his obstacles, call him a "buffoon" and put an end to the clown prince of crime.

VS. RA'S AL GHUL: While Ra's has more combat experience than Doom, Doom's edge lies in his scientific know-how, armor, magic skills and unwavering will to win. Doom would not only defeat Ra's, but take his stuff when he did.

VS. DOOMSDAY: Can you say...time platform? Though definitely a last resort (after a dozen or so failed attempts), Doom would simply lure Doomsday onto the platform and–similar to what Superman did–drop Doomsday off at the end of time.

VS. THANOS: Thanos' self-doubts would plague him and give Doom the opening he needs to take Thanos down through a combo of science and sorcery.

VS. MAGNETO: Having already perfected ways to effectively neutralize mutant powers (see *Uncanny X-Men* #145–#147), Doom's already devised a way to negate Magneto's powers, just for this scenario. Come fight time, a powerless Magneto would last under a minute.

VS. LEX LUTHOR: Close, but no cigar. While the plot surrounding the two of these trying to take each other down would have more twists and double-crosses than an entire season of "Melrose Place," Doom's grasp of political intrigue is keener, his mind for strategy is sharper, his scientific capabilities are more advanced and resources are inexhaustible.

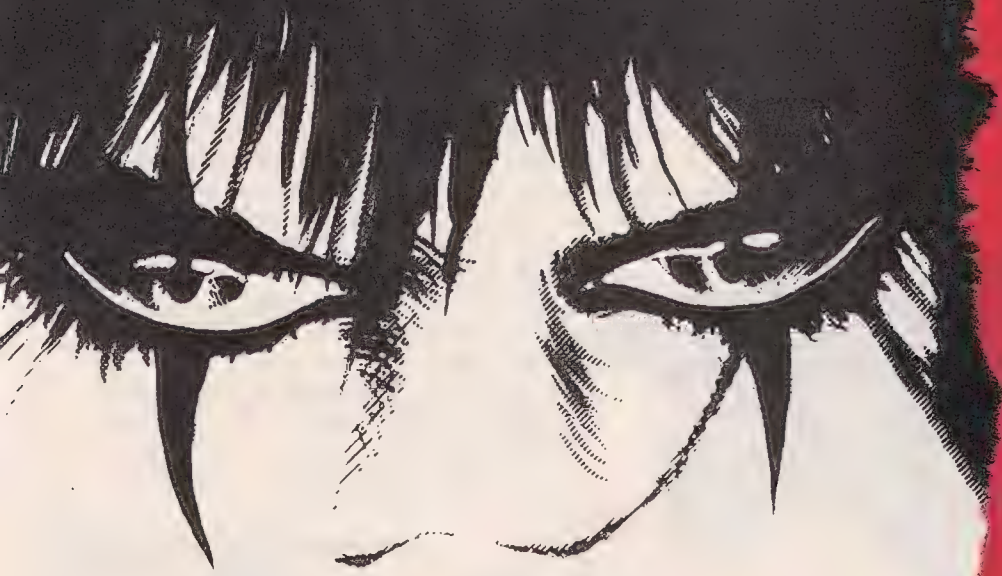
That and he's got more hair.

The Wizard *Staff folks aren't dangerous. One snap of a rolled-up towel sends them screaming like girlie-men.*

MR. NICE GUY Doom is so tough, he wears a big "D" on his belt!

Between heaven & hell...
between redemption & revenge...
lies a world where desire and death become one.

It isn't far...*as the crow flies.*



THE CROW

Shattered Lives & Broken Dreams

EDITED BY J. O'BARR AND ED KRAMER

Twenty-seven spellbinding, seductive, and shocking stories and poems—from the dark side of the soul.

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Gene Wolfe
Nancy A. Collins
Rex Miller
Caitlín R. Kiernan
Alexandra Elizabeth Honigsberg
J. O'Barr
Andrew Vachss
Iggy Pop
Henry Rollins
and others

ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY:

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CASTING call

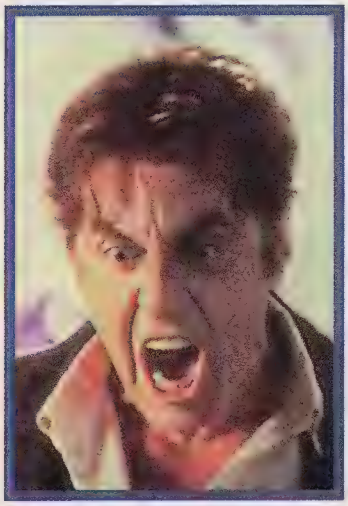
WIZARD casts the MARVEL MONSTER MOVIE!

Got a hankering for human flesh? Think blood's better on popcorn than that artificial, butter-flavored grease they serve at the movies? Rather be dead than, well, just about anything else? Brother Ghoul, do we have a movie for you.

Dim the lights, kill the previews and imagine Marvel Comics' darkest, most terrifying ghosts, goblins and grave robbers skulking their way into movie theaters everywhere in "This Blood's For You: A Horror Tale." Gruesome special effects, a chilling story of monsters and unfettered evil, and a cast of cool creeps would elevate this ferocious flick to one of horror's greatest films ever.

We opened our spell books, lit some candles and studied a plate of pig entrails to find the perfect cast.

Now be afraid. Be very afraid... there's monsters about.



AL PACINO as DRACULA

Hoo-ahhh! From "Donnie Brasco" to "The Devil's Advocate," Al Pacino rises cheeks above the competition in the bad-ass category. His villains are bad and beautiful; as the Prince of Darkness, Pacino's evil would light the screen.

STEVE BUSCEMI as MORBIUS THE VAMPIRE

Steve Buscemi from "Armaggedon" is 10 pounds of creepiness stuffed into a 5-pound bag. And look! He's even got a goatee here, just like Morbius, the character he's destined to play.

PATRICK SWAYZE as WEREWOLF BY NIGHT

Ever wonder what the werewolf does by day in his human form? Chances are, Jack Russell's a stand-in for his identical twin, Patrick Swayze from "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar."

CHRISTOPHER WALKEN as MEPHISTO

Sell your soul to the devil and Christopher Walken ("Suicide Kings") might come to collect. Walken's characters are so coolly evil, he must spend half his life in the freezer. He's our Mephisto, and everyone else's worst nightmare.

SIGOURNEY WEAVER as LILITH

With no offense to Sigourney Weaver ("Ghostbusters," Alien movies), her smile makes us very uneasy. All right, it's freaking us out! If she did that as Dracula's daughter Lilith, we'd be scared pants-less. (If we were wearing pants, that is...)

DAVID BOREANAZ as GHOST RIDER

Hunky David Boreanaz plays a haunted, centuries-old vampire on the TV show "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." With his sulky demeanor and haughty good looks, Boreanaz should do great things for Ghost Rider's alter-ego, Danny Ketch.

PIERCE BROSNAN as DR. STRANGE

Every movie needs a hero, and Pierce Brosnan ("Tomorrow Never Dies") does heroism like Mark McGwire does home runs. He's also practically swimming in self-importance, making him perfect to play the regal Dr. Strange.

WESLEY SNIPES as BLADE

Who are *we* to argue with Hollywood? When Wesley Snipes ("White Men Can't Jump") is done playing Blade in...well, "Blade," we're signing him up to do it again for this film.

GARY OLDMAN as DAIMON HELLSTROM

The son of Satan, Daimon Hellstrom, should be fairly well acquainted with Satan's second cousin, Gary Oldman. Oldman ("Lost in Space") plays villains with such skill that you'd think he keeps a summer home in Hades.

QUIET ON THE SET!

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What do you want for Christmas?

How about a Witchblade & Tomb Raider sequel drawn by Michael Turner?!

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COMING attracti

* ELIZABETH HURLEY CAN SHAG LIKE A MINX!

CRAFTY LADY

Paramount preps for 'Tomb Raider' film

Get ready to see Lara on the big screen.

Paramount Pictures has announced plans to make a live-action movie of Eidos Interactive's best-selling video game series Tomb Raider, which puts players in command of the heroic (and charismatic) adventurer Lara Croft. Since the first game's release Lara has become a worldwide phenomenon, transforming the digital vixen into the world's first virtual superstar. In addition to selling more than six million copies of the first two "Tomb Raider" games, Lara's appeared in dozens of magazines, been 'interviewed' by the press and been the subject of modeling spreads.

Producing the film are Lawrence Gordon and Lloyd Levin who've had a better-than-average record of box-office success in the past. Together, they had a hand in the first two "Die Hard" and "Predator" films, as well as recently producing "Event Horizon," "The Devil's Own" and ABC's canceled "Timecop" series.

Brent Friedman ("Mortal Kombat Annihilation") is writing the screenplay, details of which haven't been leaked. Paramount stated that its official policy is to not comment on projects still in development, but that hasn't stopped eager fans from dreaming about who should step into the hiking boots of the English adventurer (see sidebar).

Over the past year a few actresses have been linked to the role. Rhona Mitra, the first model hired by Eidos to promote the game at industry functions, has since started an acting career, and she will soon appear in "Beowulf" opposite Christopher Lambert. The English press has mentioned the better-known Elizabeth Hurley ("Austin Powers") but the actress denies any offer has been made. Another source familiar with the production said Paramount was considering former Playmate of the Year Anna Nicole Smith as Lara, a rumor that has irked many die-hard fans who want to see someone more like a female Indiana Jones.

Paramount has made no official announcement about who they're considering for Lara or even about the film's budget, possible locations or a director. But if the project continues to develop without any significant problems arising, "Tomb Raider" could appear as early as the end of next year.

Lara Croft's media dominance and the rapid diversification of the "Tomb Raider" franchise has been unprecedented in the history of video gaming. In addition to appearing on magazine covers like the trend-setting *The Face* and making a cameo on U2's "Pop Mart" tour, Lara's branched out into other avenues of entertainment.

At your local bookstore you might find copies of "Lara's Book"

TALL TALE Lara's set to move to the big screen courtesy of Paramount.

chronicling the mass appeal of the digital diva as well as featuring her in fiction by noted novelist Douglas Coupland. Michael Turner's *Tomb Raider/Witchblade* comic book from Top Cow has a sequel on the way. A Lara action figure is currently available and a statue is coming out shortly.

There's even been a tribute album featuring a song performed by former Lara model Mitra and ex-Eurythmics guitarist Dave Stewart. And in a move that should blur the lines between games and reality even further, there are now plans to produce a television series hosted by an animated Lara that would interact with guests in real-time. With the forthcoming release of "Tomb Raider III" this fall and Paramount eager to release a film in time for a late 1999 release, you can rest assured you'll be seeing a lot more Lara in your future. ■ **PATRICK SAURIOL**

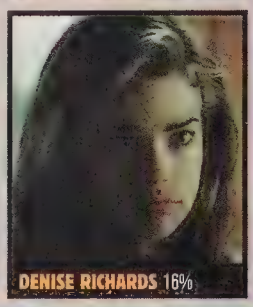
LOOKING FOR LARA

FACTS & FACES

So who's the perfect fit to step into sexy Lara Croft's hiking boots in the upcoming "Tomb Raider" movie? Through an online poll conducted by *Wizard*, the winner is shagalicious "Austin Powers" babe Elizabeth Hurley, pulling in 42 percent of the vote. Yeah, baby! Next up is snake-charmer Jennifer Lopez ("Anaconda," "Selena"), followed by bug-buster Denise Richards ("Starship Troopers," "Wild Things"). Also receiving votes were out-of-this-world Natasha Henstridge ("Species") with 7 percent and Girl Power queen Sporty Spice with 5 percent.

ELIZABETH HURLEY 42%

JENNIFER LOPEZ 18%



DENISE RICHARDS 16%

'KOMBAT' READY

Mortal Kombat live-action spin-off slated for fall television season

Are you Kombat ready?

Well, ya better put your joysticks down and get yer boots on, 'cause this fall sees the debut of "Mortal Kombat Krusades," a live-action television series spun off from the popular video game and film series. Lawrence Kasanoff, producer for the first two "Mortal Kombat" movies, will also serve as the series' executive producer. The one-hour, syndicated series is scheduled to debut with a two-part episode the week of September 28. After that, it will air weekly.

The first of 22 episodes began shooting at Universal Studios Florida in July and although the television show incorporates many of the events from the movies, fans will notice some differences. In the films, the Mortal Kombat contest took place once every generation. In the TV series, it's more of an ongoing battle between the forces of good and evil with the fate of the Earth hanging in the balance.

MERE MORTALS The forces of good (pictured above) keep Earth safe from evil in "Mortal Kombat Krusades."

The thunder god Rayden will serve as a combination general/mentor to a group of three fighters trying to save Earth from being assimilated into Outworld. The group consists of the established character of Kung Lao (played by Paolo Montalban) and two new fighters named Taja (Kristana Loken) and Ciro (Daniel Bernhardt).

"The three will form an uneasy alliance," said Mitchell Boch, executive producer for the series. "They don't know how long they'll be together, so they don't have to agree with each other about how best to do things."

Emperor Shao Khan (Jeffrey Meek) will be their nemesis, the lord of Outworld who wants to bring Earth under his heavy fist of control. Returning from the first movie is the character Tsang Tsung, portrayed by Bruce Locke (the evil Otomo in "RoboCop 3"). Tsung, Khan's main warrior and sorcerer, will command the emperor's repertoire of fighters to battle the heroes each week.

The opening two-part episode introduces the story to a general audience while remaining faithful to what established MK fans want to see. "We're definitely looking to satisfy the 'Mortal Kombat' fans," Boch explains. "There will be some crossover of characters from the series of movies and video games and we're expanding on what the Mortal Kombat tournament is." ■ **PS**

HURLEY, RICHARDS, LOPEZ PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION. MORTAL KOMBAT: CONQUEST © 1998 WARNER BROS. INC.

AMUSEMENT 'PARK'

Stone, Parker fight for R-rated 'South Park' feature film

As "BASEketball" sinks like a stone from the consciousness of American moviegoers, Trey Parker and Matt Stone aren't crying over the demise of their first big on-screen acting gigs. Nope, the creators of "South Park," the hit Comedy Central animated television show, don't have time to sob over that failure; they're too busy rushing forward to look back.

Not only are they churning out new episodes of the series (they owe 52 more to Comedy Central by 2001), but the pair have also been busy with the "South Park" feature film.

CURSES! Creators Matt Stone (left) and Trey Parker can't wait to let the profanity fly.

"We just handed in the script, and right now [Paramount Pictures president] Sherry Lansing is reading it and she's bleeding out the eyes!" Parker says gleefully.

"Because it's rated 'R,' " Stone chimes in. "That was a big thing. We're both huge 'Beavis and Butt-head' fans, but we felt like with the 'Beavis and Butt-head' movie, we felt like it was just a long episode. It didn't go to the next level. So we fought for an 'R' rating for our movie. We've been fighting this whole way for the 'South Park' movie not to be just a long episode. That means making it rated 'R,' it means bringing it up to a cinematic level, meaning that there's a reason why there's a movie, beyond just making a lot of money."

CHILD STARS Kenny, Stan and Kyle (left to right) could be hitting the big screen as early as next spring.

The film, budgeted at a modest $1.5 million, currently is scheduled for a spring 1999 release. Having a reasonable production schedule is fine with Stone and Parker, although rumor has it that Paramount may push for a Christmas 1998 release. The pair are so overworked at the moment—beyond "South Park," they are contracted to write a "Dumb and Dumber" prequel—that they don't even have time to take some pretty important meetings.

"Steven Spielberg has been asking us out to lunch, and we keep canceling! We're just too busy," Parker admits. "We always have so much stuff to do, there's never any time to just go out for a friendly lunch. We had to cancel on Casey Silver, the head of Universal, like four times in a row."

So the fact that "BASEketball" tanked isn't the end of the world for the duo; right now, it's "South Park," for big screen and small, that rules their universe. ■ **JENNY PETERS**

CONTROLLED CHAOS

Chaos! Comics forms in-house entertainment division

If Chaos! Comics has its way you'll be watching its characters in the movies sooner than you think. The sixth-largest comic book publisher in North America, Chaos! has its sights set on the arenas of film, television and interactive multimedia. And it recently launched its own in-house company, Eternal Entertainment, to realize that goal.

"Both of us dreamed of one day doing movies," says Adam Goldfine, CEO of Eternal Entertainment and childhood friend of Chaos! publisher Brian Pulido. "This is an opportunity to live a dream."

Eternal is concentrating on bringing the character Evil Ernie to the screen first. Pulido is already writing the screenplay and Chaos! is rumored to be close to signing a deal with an unnamed Hollywood producer.

WEEKEND AT ERNIE'S Evil Ernie's revved to hit theaters soon.

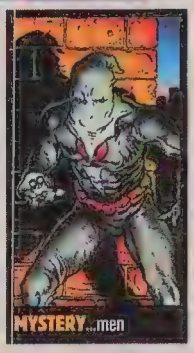
"Our intention is to have the movie in production in 1999," Goldfine revealed. "We want to bring back what horror movies are all about as well as cover new ground. We want to get into the character of Evil Ernie, make him a character the audience can sympathize with."

The company also is busy developing other projects. Lady Death hasn't been forgotten about, although Chaos! ideally sees the busty bad girl more suited for an animated series or anime project. Pulido is also pitching an as-yet-untitled comedic action/adventure film that he's co-writing with Marc Andreiko (*The Lost* comic). ■ **PS**

SOUTH PARK™ & © 1998 COMEDY CENTRAL

TRAILERS...

THE "MYSTERY MEN" ARE COMING: Bob Burden's quirky take on misfit superheroes, "Mystery Men," is coming to theaters. Originally a Dark Horse comic, the company's film division, Dark Horse Entertainment, and Universal Pictures are producing the flick. It stars Geoffrey Rush ("Shine") as the evil Cassanova Frankenstein, while William H. Macy ("Fargo"), Hank Azaria ("Godzilla"), Paul Reubens ("Pee-Wee's Playhouse") and Claire Forlani ("The Rock") are front-runners to play the Mystery Men.



GAIMAN SCRIPTS AN ALL-STAR "MONONOKOE": Miramax will release a dubbed version of "Princess Mononokoe" next summer, which made $150 million in Japan but is relatively unknown in the West. Neil Gaiman ("Sandman") is adapting the Japanese cartoon for western audiences, and already signing up to provide voice-overs are Claire Danes ("Romeo + Juliet"), Gillian Anderson ("The X-Files") and Minnie Driver ("Good Will Hunting").

MILLER'S "RONIN" COMING SOON: He's Darrin Aronofsky, Hollywood's latest hot commodity, and he's into comic books. While Dark Horse is busy publishing the comic adaptation of Aronofsky's indie sci-fi film "π" (the black-and-white look of which was partially inspired by Dark Horse Comics' "Sin City"), the 29-year-old Aronofsky is also developing DC Comics' classic *Ronin* series as a movie. Frank Miller will write the script based on his comic while Aronofsky preps his next film, "Proteus."

"HELLBOY: THE MOVIE": Guillermo Del Toro ("Mimic") is set to direct the movie adaptation of Mike Mignola's comic book series based on a script by Peter Briggs (who also penned the "Aliens vs. Predator" screenplay that was, alas, never made). Mignola's given his blessing to the screenplay Briggs submitted and "Hellboy" could be in production by early next year. The film's budget will be (at least) over the $40 million mark.

SHORT TAKES: The first of three prequels are on the way, as "Star Wars: Episode 1" is set for a May 21, 1999, release from 20th Century Fox....Check out the seventh (and possibly final) season of "Deep Space Nine" to catch the new Dax. She's Nicole DeBoer (last seen in "Deepwater Black") and her character Ezri will become the latest Trill to join with the Dax symbiote....Hank Azaria, who nabbed an Emmy for voicing Apu on "The Simpsons," is also supplying the voice for "Stressed Eric," the British animated series that's been re-dubbed by American actors....Warner Bros. and George Clooney's production company picked up Caliber Comics' "Deadworld" series for development....Matt Wagner won't comment yet but a possible live-action "Mage" film appears to be moving closer to reality....Before filming the follow-up to "Austin Powers," Mike Myers is giving the Mystery Machine a tune-up for the '90s. Myers is writing the new live-action "Scooby Doo" movie and may also star in it....The Cartoon Network recently launched its Cartoon Network Web site (www.cartoonnetwork.com), promising both original online programming and content from TCN's archives. The site will soon premiere interactive Web cartoons, the first created by Emmy Award-winning art director Gary Panter ("Pee-Wee's Playhouse"). ■ PS

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BASIC TRAINING

DOUG MAHNKE SHOWS YOU

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

HOW TO DRAW MONSTERS

When I first began to draw at the ripe old age of 2, monsters were on my "A" list. Day and night I penciled out mindless beasts in crude fashion. At roughly age 5, my grandmother asked me to draw something nice. The best I could do was a face filled with ladybugs. Many of my teachers were consumed, stomped or gutted by monsters on the backs of homework assignments.

Basically, monsters were a big part of my childhood, so I feel kinda qualified to teach a thing or two about drawing them. Sometimes the mind just needs a little spark to get going. So let the horror-fest begin...

Body Language

Monsters come in an endless variety of shapes and sizes, limited only by your sick, twisted imagination. To simplify things, let's concentrate on humanoid monsters—those which resemble us somewhat as opposed to some quivering, globulous mass slithering up from the bounds of Hell. (Although that's a lot of fun to draw, too!)

To start, let's imagine a few templates—monsters most of us are familiar with. From left to right, they include the ill-formed hunchback, the rotting zombie, the mindless brute and the winged devil. Toss in a snake and a spider for good measure.

A closer look at our hunchback reveals a simple yet effective approach to any monster: a lack of symmetry or alignment of body parts. The arms and legs are mismatched and the head's at an odd angle. Imagine that any movement causes pain. As for the others, the zombie's more bones than muscle, the brute is muscle on muscle (note how his knees buckle inward and his torso rolls in upon itself), and the devil's just real sneaky-looking as he tiptoes on his goat legs.

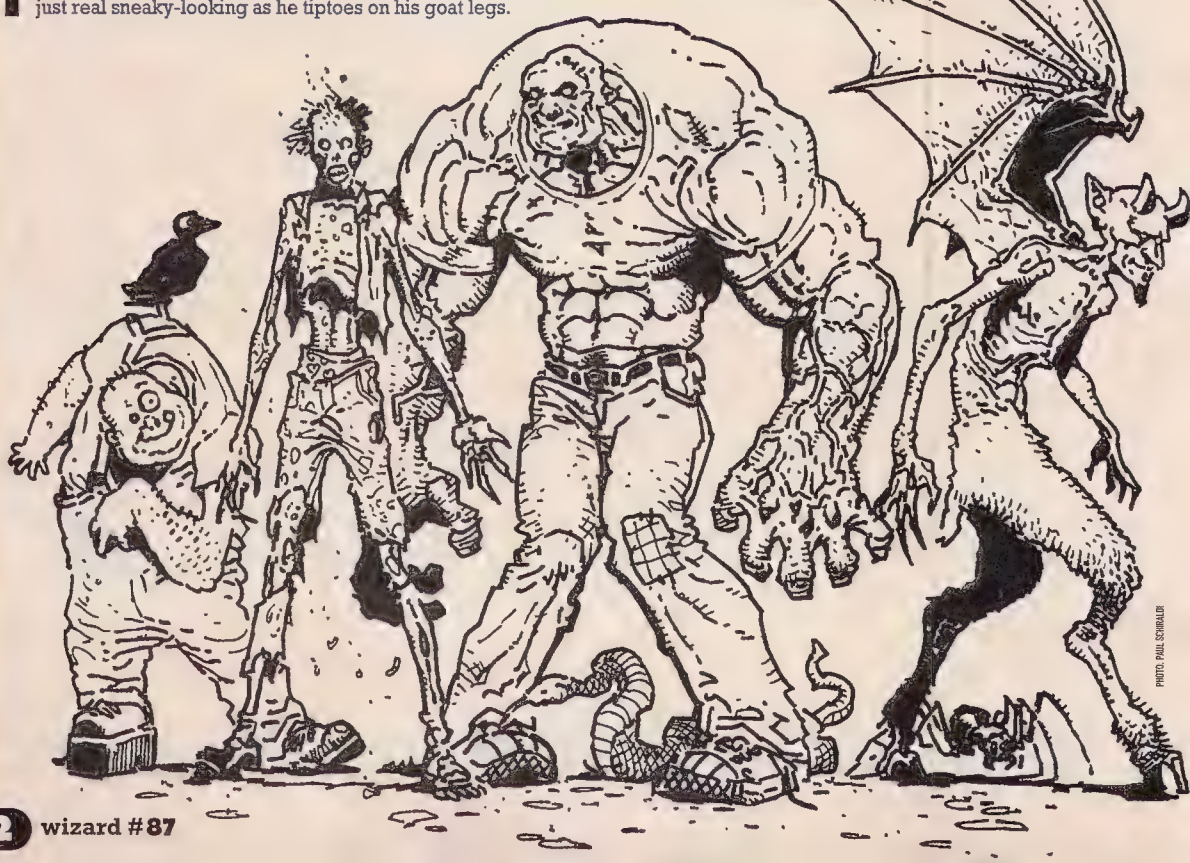
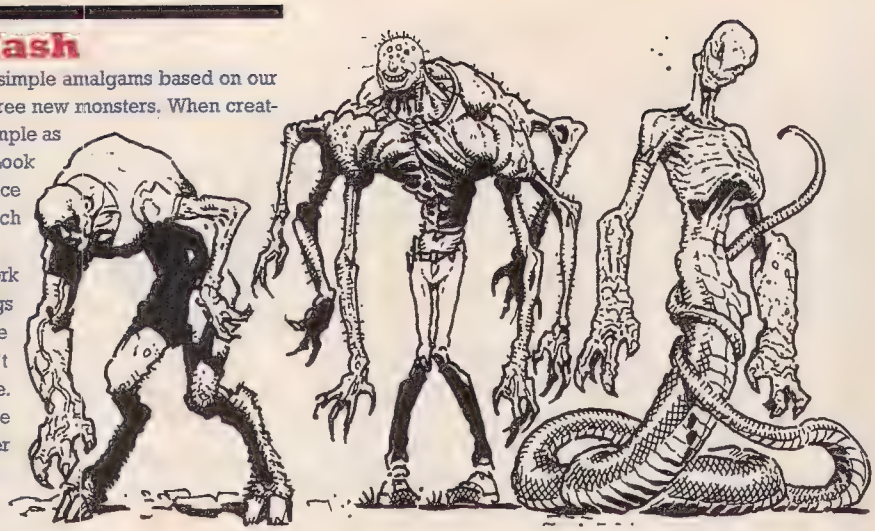


PHOTO: PAUL SCHIRALDI

The Monster Mash

Here's the fun part. I've made some simple amalgams based on our previous group and come up with three new monsters. When creating freakish creatures, it can be as simple as stitching ill-matched parts together. Look closely to see exactly what I used. Notice how the snake and spider (at a much larger size) were incorporated.

Now, some combinations may not work as well as others. Putting large devil wings on our little hunchback, or just two little spindly arms on our brute, wouldn't exactly create a more frightening image. On the other hand, having the snake coiled about the zombie while the spider crawled out of his mouth would most certainly work. Just keep practicing and you'll soon learn what works and what doesn't. Basically, show your mom: If she screams, it works.

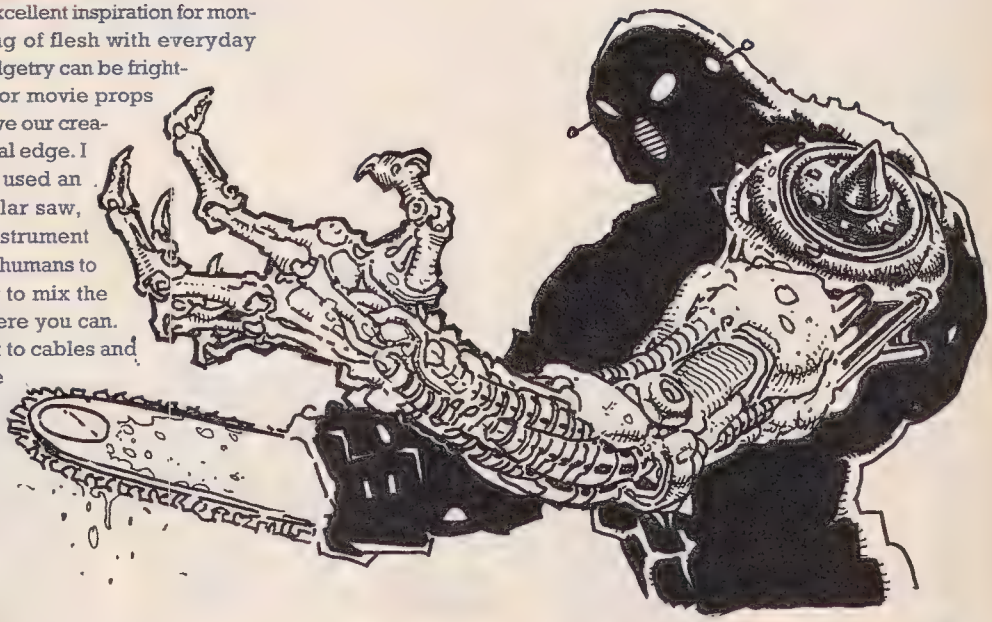


Getting Handy

When looking for inspiration, the animal world offers excellent opportunities. These hands are based on what should be obvious: the talon of a raptor, the hand of an ape and the claw of a crab. And they're all suitable for monster use. Talons are actually my favorite for monster use since they're seriously adapted to grasping soft flesh (ugh) tightly and tearing humans to pieces. The hands of lizards are also great, as are octopus tentacles, with their suckers and merciless grasp. When adding animal parts to human form, however, you have to decide: How much will make a monster of the man, or a bit of a man out of a monster? In other words, do you want your creature looking more like a human or an animal?

Machine Man

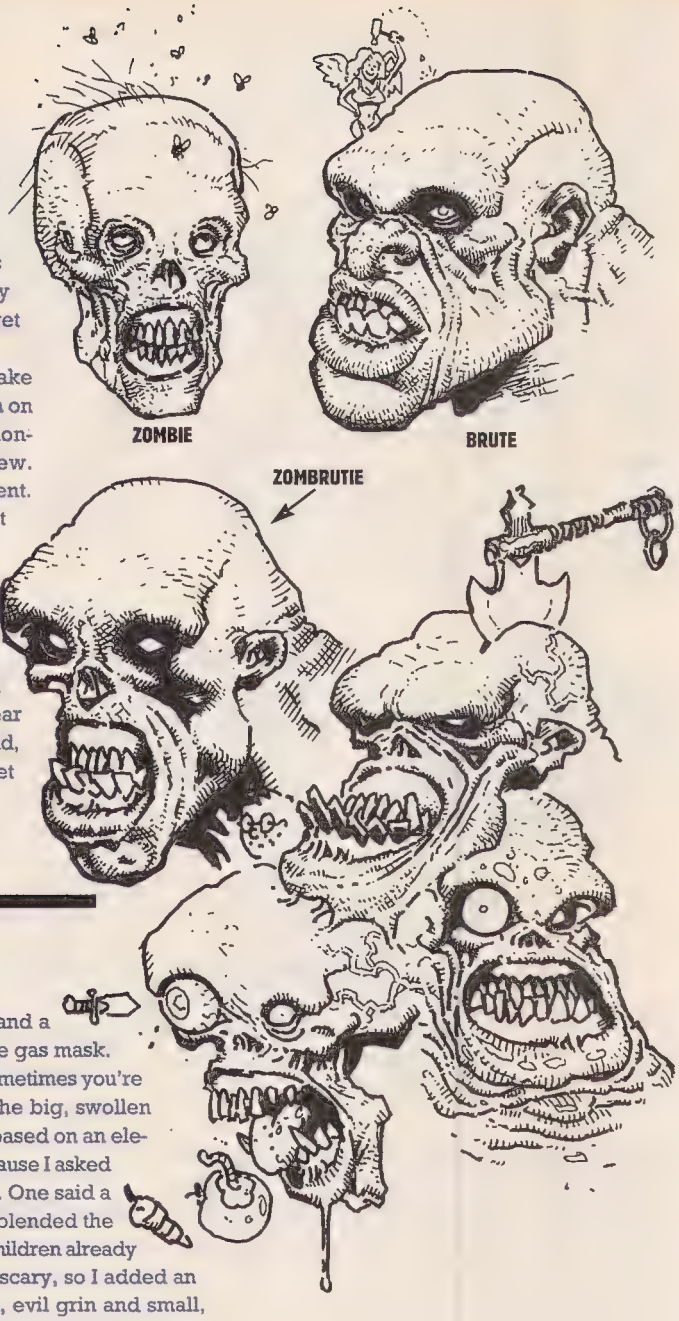
Machines can provide excellent inspiration for monster design. A mingling of flesh with everyday household tools and gadgetry can be frightening. Traditional horror movie props such as the chain saw give our creature that non-symmetrical edge. I could have just as well used an outboard motor, circular saw, drill ax or any other instrument that can cut or smash us humans to pieces. Just remember to mix the metal with flesh anywhere you can. Sinew and tendons next to cables and wires give most people the creeps. Then there's the sharp metal spikes, speaker-phone mouth, almond-shaped unblinking eyes, etc.



Put Your Heads Together

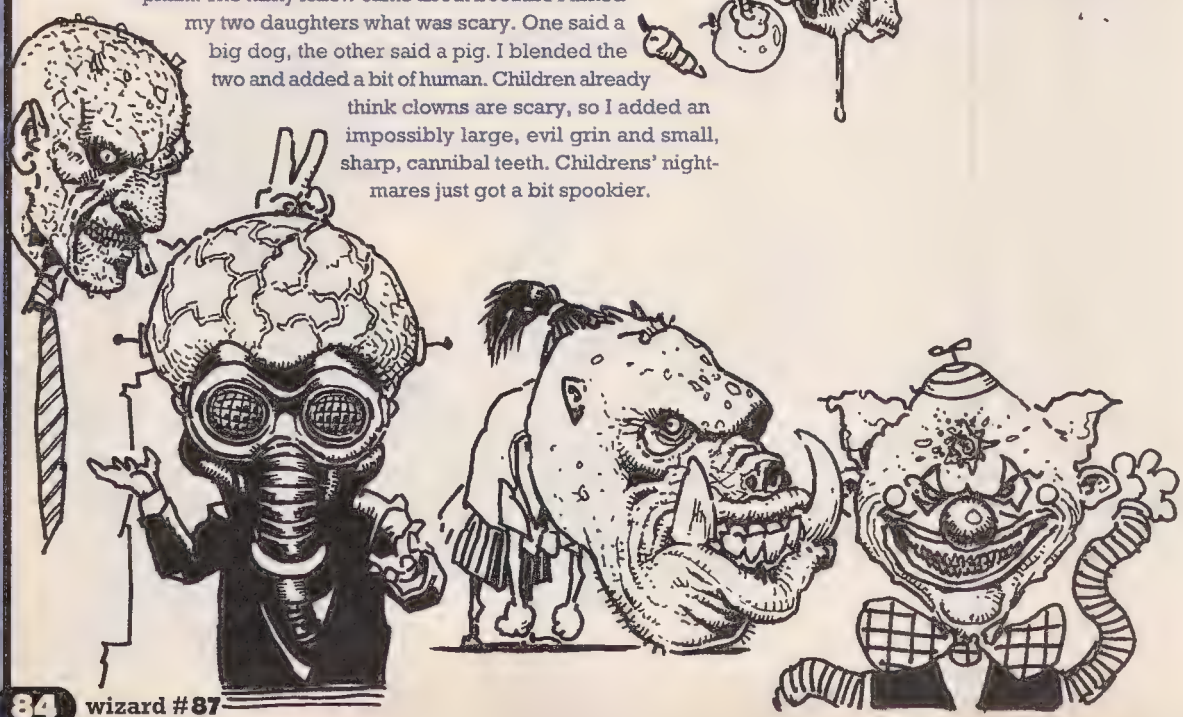
Here's a closer look at head design. We have two very different creatures—the zombie (left), with his shriveled, dehydrated look, and the thickly featured brute. By combining elements of both we achieve a "zombrutie." This is only one of many possible combinations, but you get the idea.

Now that we've established a look, let's take it a step further and put a funhouse-mirror spin on it. This is always a good approach for any monster when you're looking for something new. Squash, stretch and twist to your heart's content. If the brow is thick and protruding, smash it way down over the eyes until the entire head is mashed in. Or pull a protruding jaw way out and don't spare the teeth—separate them, crowd them, blunt them, sharpen them, whatever. Pull the lips until they're hopelessly stretched out. Or tighten the skin until it's ready to split and the eyes bulge to near popping. A tongue hanging out, an ax in the head, one eye bugging out are all simple touches, yet fun and effective just the same.



Inspiration Means Perspiration

It doesn't take much sometimes—charred flesh and a zipper for a mouth, a bulbous head with a strange gas mask. Inspiration can come from just about anywhere. Sometimes you're lucky and odd things just pop into your head. The big, swollen head with the weird gas-mask face was actually based on an elephant. The tusky fellow came about because I asked my two daughters what was scary. One said a big dog, the other said a pig. I blended the two and added a bit of human. Children already think clowns are scary, so I added an impossibly large, evil grin and small, sharp, cannibal teeth. Childrens' nightmares just got a bit spookier.



Finishing Touches

Okay, let's pull some of this together and fine tune it. Start with the head, modeled after our "zombrutie." One eye is large and bloodshot, staring out with evil intentions. I like to put extra baggage around eyes like these, giving 'em that weird, never-sleeps look. The other eye is small and dead, probably made lifeless from some horrible wound, now sewn up and scarred. The ears are rotting with bits missing, the jaw misaligned with a serious underbite. The lower lip hangs, almost flapping, with a bit of drool (not too much). Warts and a generally bad complexion cover the face. Yep, definitely someone you'd like to bring home to meet the folks.

The body is based on one of our first amalgams. I elongated the neck, with tendons and veins bulging from it. The smaller arm is webbed at the forearm, tight and springy looking, with a bony, nervous hand just waiting to grab someone. The big arm almost drags on the ground with a huge, clawed talon for crushing, clawing and destroying. The clothes are dirty and in tatters as if ripped by a hideous transformation. The torso is hopelessly bent over the legs.

This guy's just an ugly, ambulating mess, stumbling through a foggy, old cemetery. I tried to imagine a monster crushed and deformed by its own wickedness—chronically uncomfortable, hating the living. Being evil will do that to you.

Well, that's it. If drawing monsters has never been your strong point, I hope I've given you some new ideas to get started. It never hurts to get yourself in the mood: Put a scowl on your face, hunch over and grab a pencil. The best time to draw monsters for me is when it's real late at night, the rain is pounding on my window and the house is creaking in agony. I'm tired and should be sleeping. The coffee is cold and my imagination starts working overtime.

It's kinda scary that artist Doug Mahnke's twisted work can be seen monthly in the pages of DC Comics' Superman: The Man of Steel, *drawing the big blue Boy Scout. But to check out his spookerific designs, seek out DC's recently canceled* Major Bummer *series. You won't live to...er, you won't regret it.*

THE READERS SHOW THEIR CHOPS

Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for WIZARD READERS' ART

Superman's had his share of super costumes and super looks! Electro Supes, a black and white costume, long hair, etc. And in *Wizard* #81, we asked you to draw a super rendition of the Man of Steel. This month's superstar winning artist of the super "Redesign Superman" contest flies away with a super-original Tom Grummett (*Superboy*) drawing of the winner's Superman design, a super-dooper Superman '98 luminescent watch and four super-cool Superman trade paperbacks: *Superman: The Man of Steel*, *The Death of Superman*, *World Without a Superman* and *The Return of Superman*! Honorable mentions receive the super-awesome watch and the super-excellent paperbacks! Did we overuse the word "super"??? Anyway, thanks for entering this super-fun contest. See you next month!

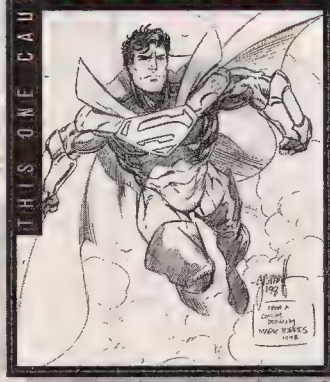
GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

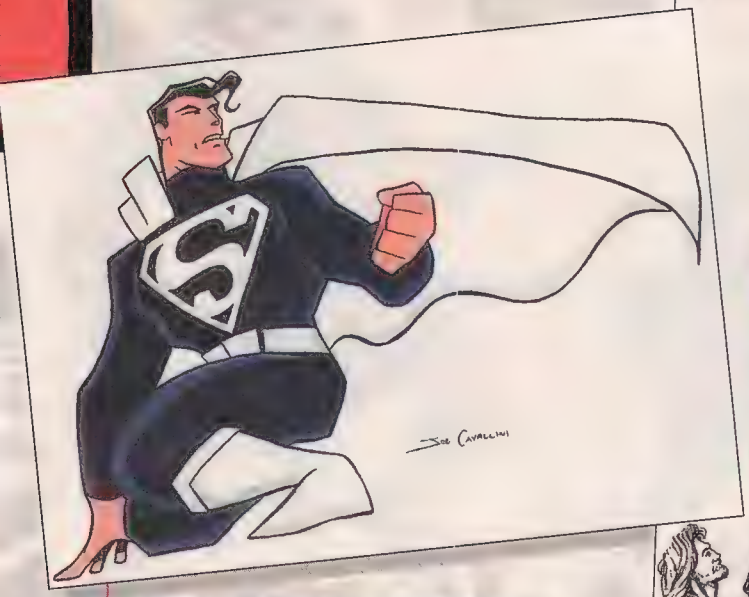
THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

BAD-ASS SUPES

MARK PHILIPS TORRES, Marikina City, Philippines

THE BOOTY





TWO-TONED SUPES
JOSEPH CAVALLIVI, Springfield, Mass.

SUPER DRAG QUEEN
MICHAEL SCOTT, Bar Nunn, Wyo.

SUPER CROSS DRESSER
TODD WARREN & JOHN NEMO, Minneapolis, Minn.

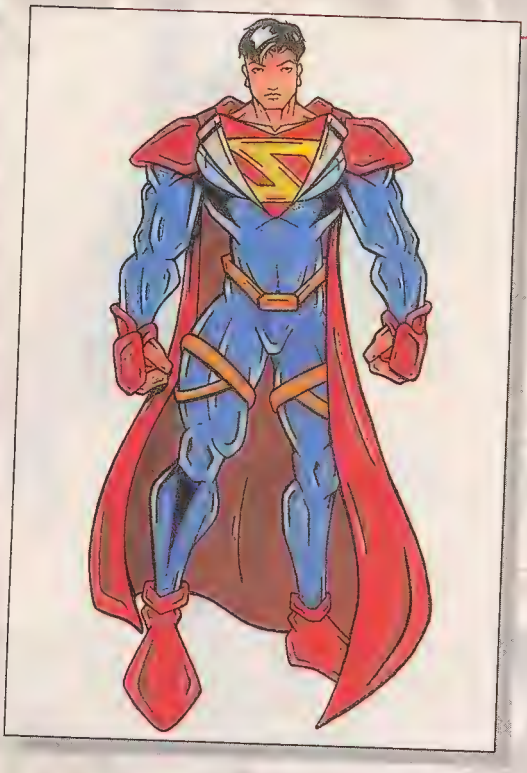
SCISSORHAND SUPERMAN
BRADFORD & JERUSHA HARDMAN, Seattle, Wash.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

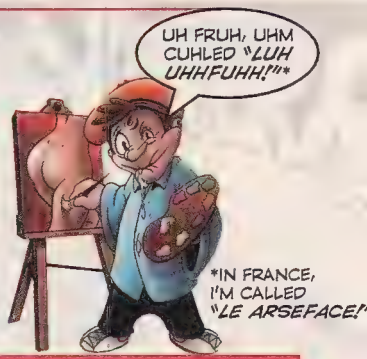
Drawing BOARD

SUPER ROMAN GLADIATORS
JEFF BRACEY, Florence, S.C.

"BRAVEHEART" SUPES
RORY WYLD!, Fredericksburg, Va.



FLAT-FOOT SUPERMAN
KURT BOUTILIER, Ontario, Canada



Want your art to appear on one of these pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your Drawing Board entries to:

SUBMIT

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

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Dress Up Deadpool!

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One wise-crackin' assassin wins the brand-new Deadpool bust, a cool Deadpool T-shirt, an assortment of Deadpool comic products including: the *Deadpool: Mission Improbable* trade paperback reprinting the first five issues of the *Deadpool* series, *Deadpool Team-Up Starring Widdle Wade*, the wacky activity book *Baby's First Deadpool Book*, the A-to-Z sourcebook *Encyclopedia Deadpoolica* and a Deadpool poster.

FIRST PRIZE (2): Two renegades each skate away with a Deadpool T-shirt, the *Deadpool: Mission Improbable* TPB, *Deadpool Team-Up Starring Widdle Wade* and a Deadpool poster.

SECOND PRIZE (5): Five bounty hunters each win a copy of the *Deadpool: Mission Improbable* TPB and a Deadpool poster.

ALL YOU GOTTA DO TO WIN is get your markers and pens out and dress good ol' Deadpool up for Halloween. Here's the kicker—you have to dress Deadpool as one of your favorite Marvel characters. Can you imagine Deadpool dressed in Spider-Man's costume? Or how about if he was belted by gamma rays and turned into the Hulk? Just make sure that in some way your creation is recognizable as Deadpool. Now get drawing! Halloween is right around the corner.

When you're done trick-or-treating with Deadpool, fill out the entry form below, attach it to the back of your drawing and send it in. Also, be sure to include two photos of yourself with the entry. Each photo (no Polaroids, please) should include your full name, date of birth, telephone number and address on the back. The most creative artists get the prizes and get featured in the pages of *Wizard*. Just remember: Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, marker, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8"x 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork. Mail flat.

MARVEL COMICS™

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT AND THERE'S NOTHING BETTER YOU COULD GET FOR HALLOWEEN THAN A COMIC BOOK.

IMPROBABLE LEGAL TEXT

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Marvel Entertainment, their immediate families and Charlie Brown. He's got bad luck at Halloween. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry and photos. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Dress Up Deadpool!" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by November 30, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries or for the fact that you get pennies and apples while trick-or-treating. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than December 25, 1998. Yeah, it's Christmas, so what? If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected and the editors of *Deadpool* may drive to your house, throw eggs at you and shaving cream your little brother. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about December 11, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after December 11, 1998 send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Dress Up Deadpool!" Art Contest Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and photos and put it all in an envelope. Send it to:

"Dress Up Deadpool!" Art Contest,
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

"Dress Up Deadpool!" Art Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE NOVEMBER 30, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail Address _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY AND PHOTOS?

LARA RAIDS YOUR TOY BOX

Lara Croft is back!

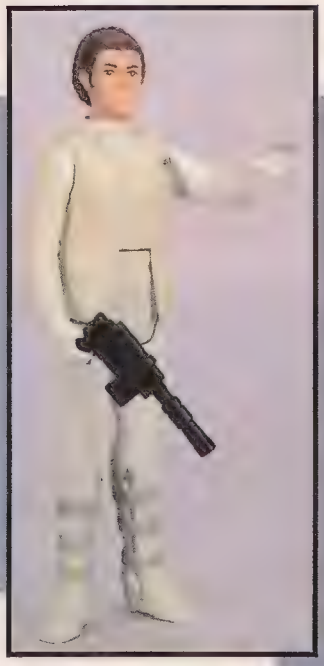
Just in time for Christmas, Playmates will deliver a 9-inch figure of the sexy star of the enormously successful *Tomb Raider* video game series in both her **wet-suit outfit** from *Tomb Raider 2* and her **traditional shorts and tank-top**. The figures will be articulated at the neck, shoulders and waist and'll come with a diorama base. As if that wasn't enough, a more posable line of 6-inch Tomb Raider toys will follow next year, and yet another line is planned for the upcoming "Tomb Raider" feature film. In addition, Playmates has also announced toy lines for the rest of the year based on the upcoming "Antz" computer animated feature, the mega-popular *Turok* video games and the new Star Trek movie, "Star Trek: Insurrection."

PLAYMATES LARA AND TUROK, TOO
Playmates launches new toy lines late this year and early next year. From left: Lara in wet suit outfit with base, without base and Turok.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PLAYMATES.

BY TOM PALMER JR.

Star Wars keeps on comin'...Spawny-guy gets medieval...Razor burns!



BOO-YAH! MORE STAR WARS!

The Kenner Star Wars juggernaut just keeps rolling on and on.

After the recent Expanded Universe offerings based on the host of Star Wars novels and comic books, Kenner's returning to more familiar ground with a bunch of fan-requested figures including **Hoth Leia**, **AT-AT Driver** (previously available with the deluxe AT-AT vehicle), the **Death Star Droid with a tiny mouse droid** and **Pote Snitkin**, one of Jabba the Hutt's skiff guard cronies. Also on the way is a special Jedi Spirits 3-pack with **translucent versions of Yoda, Obi-Wan Kenobi** and **Anakin Skywalker** and a Cantina Aliens 3-pack with **Snaggletooth, Labria** (the devil-looking guy) and **Nabrun Leids** (the guy with the pickle-looking head with four arms).

Look for all of these Star Wars toy releases by the end of the year.

And if all that wasn't enough, Kenner is also releasing two special action figures with pop-up cardboard dioramas. You can choose from the **Sandtrooper with a Cantina backdrop** or **Han Solo in Carbonite with Jabba the Hutt's palace.**

STAR WARTIME Clockwise from top left: Death Star Droid with tiny mouse droid, Hoth Leia, Pote Snitkin, Jedi Spirits 3-pack and Sandtrooper with Cantina backdrop.

STAR WARS PHOTOS COURTESY OF KENNER

SPAWNING BACK IN TIME

Spawn's gettin' medieval on yo' ass!

In the vein of the recent Manga Spawn assortments, McFarlane Toys is offering up another set of alternate-reality Spawn action figures with Dark Ages Spawn. The line throws Spawn back in time to a land of knights and dark magicians. Dark Ages Spawn, the eleventh series of Spawn toys, includes **Spawn: the Black Knight, the Raider, the Spellcaster, the Skull Queen, the Ogre** and **the Horrid.**

These Dark Ages Spawn toys should be in toy stores right now!

THE RAIDER

THE BLACK KNIGHT

THE HORRID

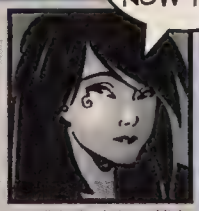
SKULL QUEEN

OGRE

SPELLCASTER

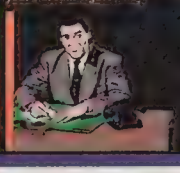
Creepy WISH LIST

THE 10 FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE



1) **DEATH** She's cute as a button, so she's perfect material for an action figure. Vertigo's embodiment of death would come with a removable top hat and a li'l black-lace umbrella.
2) **CRIMSON** Humberto Ramos' scary comic is so awesome, it needs its own action figure line! Toys of Alex Elder and the vampiric Jelly Bats Gang would be a good place to start.
3) **BLOODSTORM** This *Mutant X* alternate-reality version of Storm is all vampire and all action! A Bloodstorm figure would have to have snap-on lightning bolts and light-up red eyes.
4) **MARILYN MANSON** Your mom may not like him, but lanky rock star Marilyn Manson would scare the crap out of all your other toys. The Manson toy would have a screaming voice chip and–eww! removable costumes.
5) **BLACK FLASH** Sure, this toy would pretty much be a bag o' bones in a dark Flash costume (as seen in *The Flash* #139–#141), but it would look extra-creepy with a glow-in-the-dark face.
6) **GARGOYLE** How would you make a toy of Marvel's orange-hued Gargoyle the best it could be? Simple. Give him flapping wings and snap-on mystical blasts.
7) **MICHAEL MYERS** He's the guy who started the whole slasher flick craze in "Halloween," so why isn't there a Michael Myers toy? The figure would have to come with a bunch o' blood-stained knives, of course.
8) **CAIN AND ABEL** The Dreaming's two loving brothers would make for a perfect action figure two-pack. Throw in the li'l gargoyle Goldie and this toy would rock!
9) **GRIM REAPER** Marvel's costumed bad guy's making a comeback so the time is ripe to give the Reaper his due. Give this toy a spinning light-up scythe for all sorts of decapitating fun!
10) **CHARAXES** He used to be Bat-villain Killer Moth, but this mutated dude would have a gooey spewing action and an extending mouth tube to suck out his victim's innards. Yum.

Hey! Keep sending in your requests! You've already made a difference! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:

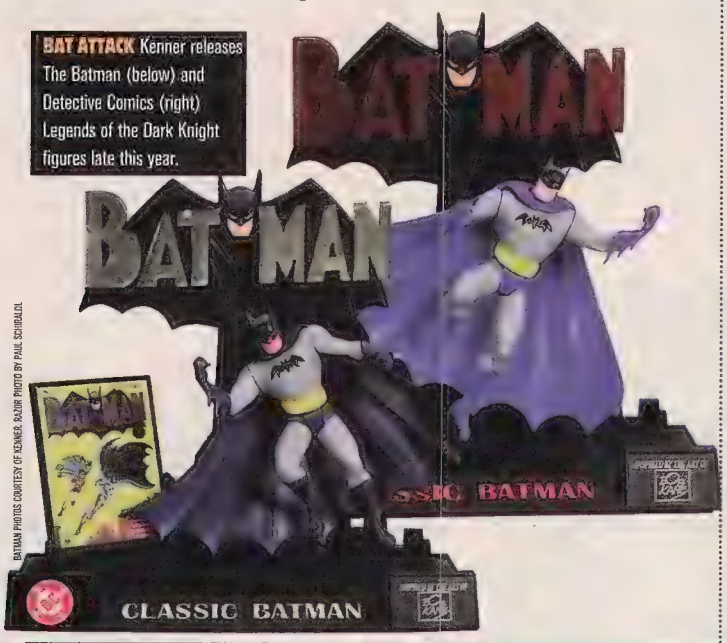


TOY WISH LIST
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920
Or e-mail us at:
WizardTGTC@aol.com

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MCFARLANE TOYS.

BATMAN GOES RETRO

Die-hard Batman collectors are gonna go nuts for Kenner's latest additions to its Legends of the Dark Knight line. Batman's back in his original duds for the Bob Kane Batman collection, two different versions of the familiar Caped Crusader in costumes based on creator Bob Kane's designs from *Batman* and *Detective Comics*. Each figure will be packaged on a special display stand with a Batman logo and comic book cover backdrop.



BAT ATTACK Kenner releases The Batman (below) and Detective Comics (right) Legends of the Dark Knight figures late this year.

BATMAN PHOTOS COURTESY OF KENNER. RAZOR PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIBALDI.

RAZOR SHARP Comic bad girl Razor cuts into the action figure market in January.

RAZOR'S EDGE

The gang at Antarctic Press has been building up a pretty diverse line of action figures. Following up on recent releases like Flaming Carrot and Usagi Yojimbo is London Night Studios' bad girl Razor. The figure will arrive in a Razor Burn deco with a bunch of scratches and blood stains. In addition, the figure will have detachable razor accessories and will have a variant glow-in-the-dark edition. Look for this figure in January.

ToyFare *Assistant Editor Tom Palmer Jr. is a man of means by no means, but he is king of the road.*

At Last!

WIZARD #1/2 OFFER

Shadowcat, Colossus and Nightcrawler have returned to the X-Men just in time to have their world turned upside-down. The action starts when the X-Men find themselves living their lives in a Tolkien-esque fantasy world where dragons soar, magic works and a dark wizard is amassing an army to lay waste to an entire village. Now, the X-Men must not only figure out where they are and how they got there, but have to save a village as well. Everything leads to a shocking revelation, when it's discovered who the dark wizard truly is—and what his plans are for the six time-lost mutants.

You can join Wolverine, Storm, Shadowcat, Colossus, Marrow and Nightcrawler in this fantastic world and discover the hidden identity of the dark wizard by simply filling out the order form, enclosing three U.S. dollars and mailing it in. Get it done, X-fan!

Within the X-Men #1/2, you'll find these hidden treasures:

- A brand-new story written by Todd Dezago and drawn by Mike Wieringo!
- An exclusive X-Men story filled with dragons, magic and your favorite team of mutants!
- The first-ever X-Men work for fan-favorite artist Mike Wieringo!
- A look into the sketchbook of Mike Wieringo! Check out his designs for the fantasy-land X-Men!
- And the most magical morsel of all—this is an X-Men story you won't find anywhere else! This exclusive comic is available through this one-time Wizard offer only!
- Just in case you forgot—it's the X-Men!

Cast a spell and get yourself down to the post office. This offer won't last long.

LEGAL TOME

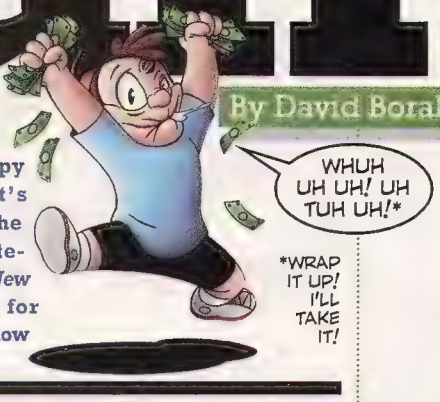
No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope. With this coupon, you can order two comics. You may put additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00, other foreign orders remit $6.00. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Entertainment Group. Offer good only while supply lasts. Please allow eight-to-12 weeks from date of expiration for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Entertainment is notified in writing by December 23, 1998.

THIS OFFER EXPIRES DECEMBER 23, 1998

stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff



Who among us doesn't like creepy Halloween stuff? Whether it's Vampirella's A-1 Steak Sauce, Mort the Dead Teenager's Decomposing Skateboards or Werewolf By Night's *Guide to New York After 8 P.M.*, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise, no matter how creeperific.

MASKING AND RELAXING Trick-or-treaters can scare your socks off in new Marvel masks.

MASKED MARVELS

Marvel Comics and Disguise Inc. present a series of latex masks made to frighten the fanboys away this Halloween. Marvel Adult Latex Masks ($30-$40) feature the ugly mugs of Wolverine, Hulk, Venom, Dr. Doom and the Green Goblin. Each mask is large enough for most adults and comes with care instructions.

DARK CHOCOLATE This Halloween, save the chocolate for yourself. Give the trick-or-treaters circus peanuts.

DEATH BY CHOCOLATE

Kitchen Sink Press presents a truly sinful Halloween treat—Lady Death and the Women of Chaos! Chocolate Bars and display box ($35). Each box contains 15 separate two-ounce chocolate bars wrapped in full-color illustrations of Chastity, Purgatori and Lady Death by Chaos! Comics artists. Chastity's bars are pure milk chocolate, Purgatori's bars are milk chocolate with almonds and Lady Death's bars are pure white chocolate. These bars come in a cigar-style box covered with full-color art. Empty boxes ($12.50) also are available separately. Look for this unique item available now.

'POOL PARTY He has no arms, but is far from unarmed.

PORCELAIN 'POOL

Bowen Designs has cranked out a killer's cold-cast porcelain bust—Deadpool. Sculpted by Randy Bowen, the Deadpool Mini-Bust ($35) measures 5 inches tall and shows the assassin with two guns and two swords sheathed on his back. Deadpool is limited to just 3,000 editions and will be available in November.

WITCHY SERENADES

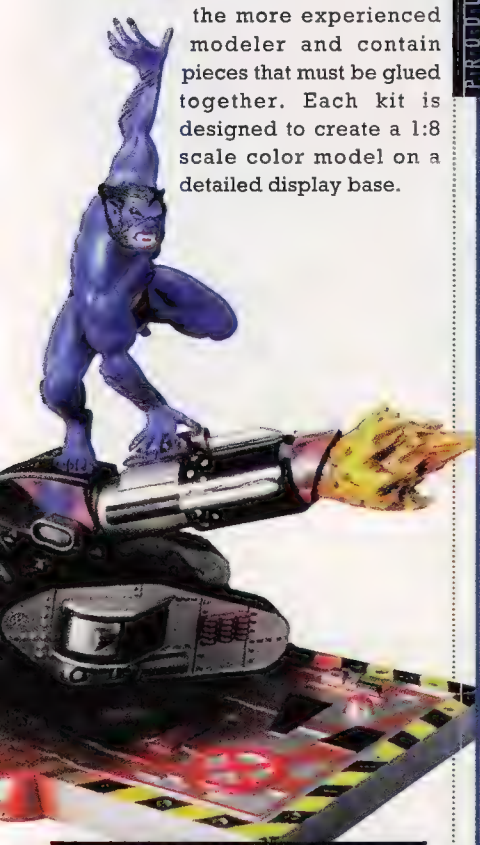
Wonder what Sara Pezzini listens to while she's kicking butt as bearer of the Witchblade? We suspect it's *Songs of the Witchblade* ($16.95), a monster CD from Top Cow and DreamWorks Records. The disc features two covers (one by Marc Silvestri and the other by Mike Turner) and music by Babes in Toyland, Peter Steele (from Type O Negative), Boys vs. Girls, Lydia Lunch and others. The CD is meant to more or less serve as a soundtrack to the comic book and "follows" the events of *Witchblade* #1-#8; both versions will be released in September and October.

SING ALONG Art never looked this good on record albums.

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

MODELS MOST MARVELOUS

This month, Marvel Comics and Toy Biz present the next wave in a series of models designed for different levels of model-building expertise. First, look for Marvel Level 1 ($9.99 each) models containing only 15-18 snap-together pieces per kit of the X-Men's Beast and the Spider-Man villain Rhino. Next, keep an eye out for Marvel Level 2 kits ($11.99 each), with 24-26 pieces per kit of Captain America and Thor. Level 2 kits are for the more experienced modeler and contain pieces that must be glued together. Each kit is designed to create a 1:8 scale color model on a detailed display base.



BEASTIE BOY New model kits from Toy Biz let you build a better mutant.

HOT STUFF!!!!!!!!

PRODUCTS OF THE MONTH

SPORTY SPARTAN STUFF

This November, keep an eye out for some great stuff from Dark Horse featuring Frank Miller's new series *300*–including the 300 Limited-Edition Lithograph ($300) with art by Miller and Lynn Varley. Each 30" X 22.5" lithograph is printed in full color and depicts the lone figure of Leonidas, the Spartan king. The lithograph is printed on acid-free paper and comes shrink-wrapped with a white backing board and a corrugated black envelope with the *300* logo in gold-foil stamping. It's limited to 300 copies, naturally. Next, light up your life with the 300 Zippo Lighter ($29.95). This high-polish, brass-finish lighter features a three-dimensional Spartan shield on the front and the *300* logo etched into the top.

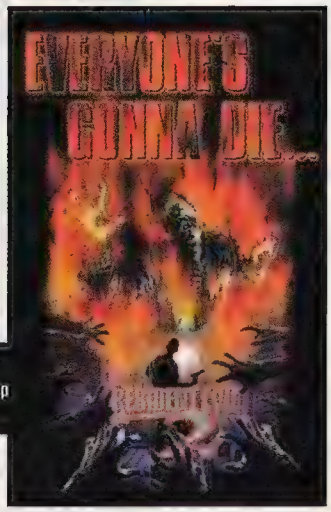
GRECIAN YEARN The Greeks gave birth to modern civilization–pay them back by buying these Spartan goodies.

POCKET SANDMAN

Like the rock band Metallica said, "Take my hand—we're off to never-neverland." To celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Sandman*, DC Comics and Vertigo present the Sandman Pocketwatch ($89.95). This silver-finished working timepiece has an engraved cover with the silver-and-black illustrated face of Morpheus (from *Sandman* #14) with art from Mike Dringenberg and Malcolm Jones III. It comes packaged with a matching fob chain so you can attach it to your clothing. Look for it this November.

TIME TO SLEEP Be even more self-important with this Sandman watch.

stuff



UNGRATEFUL DEAD Everyone's gonna die, but until then you can creep yourself out with Resident Evil stuff.

EVIL IS GOOD

WildStorm and Capcom try to bring *Resident Evil 2* into everyone's homes with the Resident Evil 2 poster and mouse pad. First, the Resident Evil 2 "Everyone's Gonna Die" Poster ($8.95) features disturbing artwork and the game's popular catch phrase. It's in full color and measures 24" X 36". Also available is the Resident Evil 2 Body Bag Mouse Pad ($15.95). This full-color item measures 7.5" X 9" and shows a very unhappy gentleman looking up at your mouse. Both will be available in October.

A BUSTY XENA

Moore Creations brings you the Xena Cold-Cast Porcelain Bust ($95) featuring everyone's favorite warrior princess. Sculpted by Clayburn Moore, each of the 7,500 busts depicts Xena actress Lucy Lawless. Each piece stands 10 inches tall (including base) and will be available by the time you read this.

WARRIOR PRINCESS Hey, how is Xena gonna battle on with no arms?

BARBARIAN IN BRONZE

Hard Hero Enterprises debuts with the Conan the Barbarian Porcelain Sculpture ($199). This cold-cast porcelain statue of Robert E. Howard's classic figure stands 14 inches tall, including the base. It's limited to 5,000 copies. A special bronze edition ($2,500) that stands 15 inches tall also will be available with a run of just 100 copies. Look for both this November.

CROM! Maybe it's best if we don't make a sword joke here.

KISSABLE BEARS

Spencer Gifts presents a set of teddy bears representing each member of the rock band KISS, stars of the creepy comic *KISS: The Psycho Circus* ($49.99 each)! You'll find the visages of Gene, Paul, Peter and Ace on these silver-clad bears which are dressed in their commemorative classic KISS costumes. Look for them in all Spencer stores this October.

KISS THE BEARS These stuffed bears will neither rock and roll all night nor party every day.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

HEY! Are you a company putting out fun comic-related merchandise like statues, T-shirts, novelties, magnets, etc.? We'd like to preview 'em! Please send all info and sample products to:

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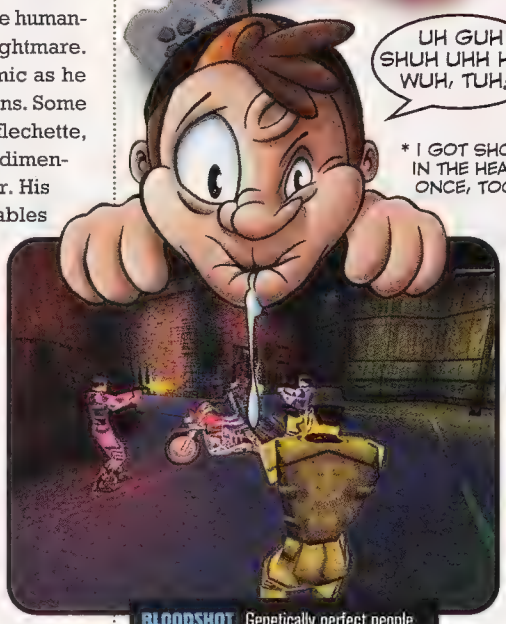
video STUFF

By Matt Danish

Video killed the radio star, but who's complaining? Certainly not us. Welcome to "Video Stuff," a column where we let loose with news, previews, reviews and super-secret codes for the hottest, most spanktacular console and PC games around. Fire up the controllers...it's video game time.

SHOT OF 'BLOOD'

Bloodshot, a 3-D shooter based on the Acclaim comic of the same name, will be ready for the PlayStation and PC in 1999. The game's protagonist, Raymond Garrison, is a genetic experiment, an immortal being comprising billions of infinitesimal re-animation machines, which animate his flesh. Created by scientists bent on a dream of perfectible humanity, Raymond "Bloodshot" Garrison has now become their worst nightmare. In *Bloodshot,* Garrison will encounter familiar faces from the comic as he stalks the bad scientists through more than 20 levels with 22 weapons. Some of these weapons include microwave and sonic-beam guns and a flechette, a gun that shoots hundreds of tiny darts. The game features multi-dimensional firing, so Bloodshot can strafe one way while moving another. His sci-fi body, engineered by a process known as nanite infusion, enables him to absorb and replicate objects and information, so that once he encounters enemy tactics or hard weaponry, it is added to his personal arsenal. In addition, special power-ups enable him to vampire-suck the energy of his enemies, increasing his life force or temporarily driving his enemies insane.



BLOODSHOT Genetically perfect people still bleed when perforated.

STAR-FILLED 'SUN'

Actors James Earl Jones ("Star Wars") and Michael Biehn ("Terminator") are taking their act straight to video—video games, that is. The actors will appear in Westwood Studios' *Command and Conquer: Tiberian Sun,* which is scheduled to be released in November for PCs and, possibly, the PlayStation.

The game, which features multiple *Warcraft*-style army battles and missions, revolves around the eternal fight between good and evil; in *Sun,* Jones and Biehn will appear as the good guys. Jones will play General Solomon, leader of an elite army group, General Defense Initiative. Commander McNeil, Solomon's second-in-command, will be played by Biehn. Both Biehn and Jones will appear between player missions, in full-motion-video sequences, and their characters will give players various gameplay hints, as well as establish *Sun*'s storyline.

MMMM. HUMAN FLESH. In the *House of the Dead,* they serve brains–the *other* white meat–for Sunday brunch.

MONSTER MOVIE MASH

Comic book- and screenwriter Mark Verheiden (*Aliens*) is working on the script for the feature film adaptation of the Sega video game *House of the Dead.* The movie will be directed by Jesse Dylan (son of famous folk singer Bob Dylan), and DreamWorks is scheduled to produce the film, published reports say.

The movie is expected to be loosely based on *Dead*'s plot. The game is a first-person shoot-'em-up involving tons of skin- and brain-eating zombies. Verheiden's plot concerns itself with a small, private college in a small town where most of the really upscale students are zombies. ■

UP AHEAD

Killer Castles...Mitochondria gone mad...Sir Dan the really dead man...and more, more, more!!!

SPECIAL HOLIDAY TOY SHOPPER ISSUE!

ToyFare™

TOY MAGAZINE #17

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ON SALE IN NOVEMBER

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Photo by Paul Schiraldi.

PARASITE EVE

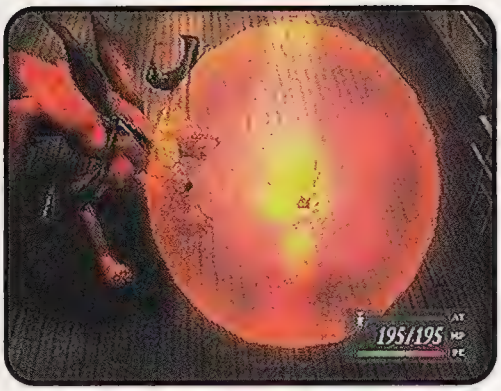
MANUFACTURER: Square Soft
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $59.99; available November 1998

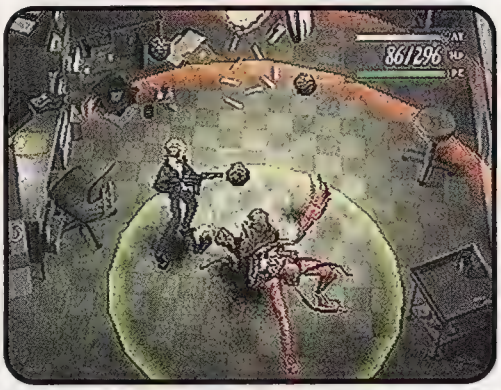
Horror is going to the opera. Absolute horror is attending an opera and then getting flash-fried by a twisted singer wielding unimaginable powers. In *Parasite Eve,* New York City cop Aya Brea watches a crowd of people burst into flame, murdered by the mysterious crooner Melissa (who refers to herself as "Eve"). Brea leaps head-first into the mystery, discovering she's the only one who can survive Eve's attacks and—even stranger—that she's developing powers of her own.

Eve is a gutsy, take-no-prisoners mystery/spookathon. It combines elements of role-playing adventures and *Resident Evil*-type third-person 3-D action and blends them into an interesting, if just a bit awkward, hybrid. Brea walks and runs more slowly than a snail traveling uphill, and the game's plot is barely digestible (Killer mitochondria? Come on!), but these shortcomings are minuscule compared to *Eve*'s grand scope and its solid gameplay.

Brea's fights take place in real-time, with the player being able to run across the battlefield at will to shoot at foes and avoid projectiles and attacks—a wonderful alternative to the drudgery of turn-based battles. Gameplay takes place over six days (and two PlayStation CDs), with Brea tracking her prey all over New York and battling the freakish mutations (fire-shooting rats, etc.) Melissa has let loose on the city. With each battle, Brea gains experience and may see an increase in her powers or "hit points." Players can acquire, use and even modify a good crop of weapons and body armor, as well as healing potions and powerups, to make Brea's life easier. But not that easy. ■ **By Greg Orlando**

TRY IT... If you like *Resident Evil I* or *II*, role-playing games or the idea of killer mitochondria seeking revenge on their human hosts, split a gene or two for *Parasite Eve.*





GETTIN' EVE-N Donuts? Do not speak to super-cop Aya Brea of donuts or she'll turn into a blinding red ball (above).

MEDIEVIL

MANUFACTURER: Sony Computer Entertainment
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $49.99; available October 20

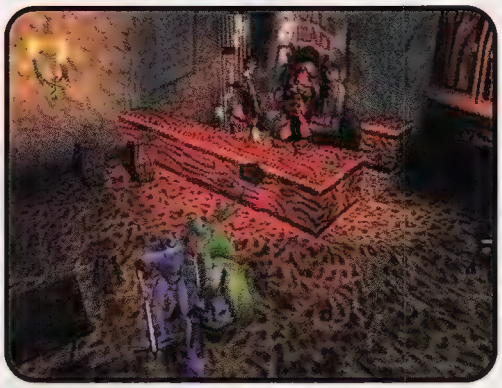
Sir Dan was one of the grateful dead—literally—until his fetid, decomposing corpse was reanimated by his greatest enemy, the sorceror Zarok. Now the undead warrior is the most reluctant hero of all, a skeleton out to avenge his resurrection.

Dan's the sword-swinging, ass-kicking skeleton hero of the firmly tongue-in-cheek 3-D puzzle-solving action/adventure *MediEvil. Sans* jawbone and one eye (inexplicably, his right eyeball is intact), the bony Dan is quite the comic figure. He's out to destroy Zarok, but in the process, he'll make even the most hardened video game fan chuckle with his jerky movements and thick Spanish accent.

Players must guide Dan through a series of creepily lit levels, battling (among others) shambling zombies, a stained-glass demon and evil-minded scarecrows. If a player kills a goodly number of foes, Dan will be granted access to the "Hall of Heroes," where he can get his bony hands on a variety of super-weapons.

Wizard previewed the game's opening levels, and while *MediEvil*'s hero is dead, the gameplay certainly isn't. After exiting his tomb, Dan is thrust into a graveyard where coffins explode from the Earth and vomit killer zombies. Later on, the bony warrior must scale a series of inclines while huge boulders (*á la* "Raiders of the Lost Ark") plummet around him—surely an experience to be savored by all, save for perhaps the recently interred. ■ **By Greg Orlando**

TRY IT... If you like *Jersey Devil, Ghosts and Goblins* or *Blasto*, do not rest in peace until you get *MediEvil.*



BURY GARCIA? Sir Dan heads home to the graveyard (above) and trods into battle with his trusty mace (below). And he's dead, too!

MORE→

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KAGERO: CASTLE OF DECEPTION 2

MANUFACTURER: Tecmo
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $49.95, available now

Ever dream of being pursued through a castle by a slow-moving but relentless ax-murderer? With its stalking gameplay, ghostly moaning Gregorian soundtrack and convoluted plot that dissolves the traditional barrier of good and evil, Kagero delivers a nightmarish game for Halloween.

Players control a female protagonist named Millenia as she leads several sword- and knife-wielding stalkers to their elaborately orchestrated deaths. While each stalker wields a club, ax or sword, Millenia's weapons consist of such devices as a giant mechanical cycle that swings back and forth from the ceiling keeping time like a metronome. Millenia also spins flesh-rending saw blades into which she can trick an attacker. There are even more devilish human mouse traps—areas marked by colored lights which are coded to the Sony's colored buttons—into which Millenia can lead her pursuers.

TRY IT... If you like slasher films, *Beast Busters* or *Mousetrap*, you'll love *Kagera*.

Millenia must inflict enough damage with the traps (a trap can be reused many times but must recharge) to deplete her human stalker's life meter, at which point the stalker will collapse into an expanding circular pool of his own dark blood. On later levels, Millenia can actually place the traps by using the controller to position the colored lights before the level begins. Multiple killing tactics are especially lethal; for instance, snare a human in a bear trap, then crush him against the wall. When he staggers bloodily into the water, send an electric charge into it to finish him off like a roach. ■

REST IN PIECE Here's a hint when visiting the Castle of Deception: set your cell phone to speed-dial 911.

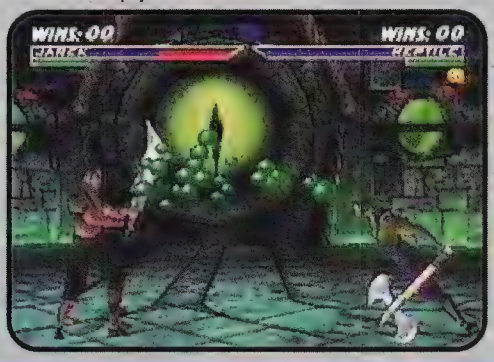
CHEATSHEET

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

MORTAL 'MEAT'

Everybody loves meat. And now, the delectable treat is also a playable character in Midway's *Mortal Kombat 4*. Here's what you've got to do to fight as this skinless abomination. Mmmm. Meat.

- Select "Arcade" from the game's main menu and choose one-on-one Kombat.
- Select "Group" from the character select screen and allow player two to choose any character.
- Fight, but let player one win. Player two should press "Start" on the screen where the defeated hero plummets to his death.
- Repeat this process until player one has fought with all the characters.
- After player one has won the battle with Sonya Blade, he should return to the character select screen and choose any fighter (do *not* select "Group"). Meat will be substituted for the player's choice.



webline

IT CAME FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB

angelfire.com/ca/chrystie/index.html
Webwitch Chrystie's Frightmare Haunted Halloween Web site will scare the bejeezus out of you!

www.gaialogic.org/gaianation/gaiasporing.html
Site contains ruminations on human beings as "spores" of interplanetary Gaia consciousness.

www.space-tv.com/mir
A Mir space station Web site including video of Halloween on Mir.

www.wizworks.com/
The WizardWorks' Home Page including information on their many PC simulations.

www.hauntedhome.com/
The Haunted Home Page has tons of Halloween-related goodies and scares for everyone.

ling.ucsc.edu/~chalmers/zombies.html
Want to know about the living dead? This site has tons of information on the flesh-eating no-goodniks, plus a good crop of links to other zombie-related sites. ■

WIZARD PRESENTS

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HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

HEY, QUIT YER WHININ' YA BABIES. They don't make figures of your favorite characters? You think you could make better ones than already exist? Either way, it's time to put up or shut up. The figures you see here were crafted by ordinary readers just like you. Starting with simple store-bought action figures, these go-getters combined a little imagination with some stuff from around the house. They will now be judged by the highest authority...us!

GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

REGGIE FROM "PHANTASM"

Justin Zaharizuk of Levittown, Pa.

Yeah, we didn't know who this guy was either until we did some research, but it's Reggie from "Phantasm." Anyway, it doesn't matter who he is, 'cause he's fantastic! And would ya believe that this is a fully poseable 9-inch figure? With real yak hair even! The detail of this freshly sculpted figure is unreal.

WHAT WE GAVE AWAY!

The ultra-cool grand-prize winner walks away with a Green Lantern cold-cast statue.

Many thanks to DC Comics for this nifty prize.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

KILLER FROM "SCREAM"

John Tatarelli Jr. of Brookhaven, Pa.

Talk about eerie! The terrifying "Scream" killer swoops into action after being reborn from a Kenner Star Wars Imperial Guard and some help from Plastalene, normal sculpting tools and an airbrush.

BELASCO

Tym Davis of Alabaster, Ala.

The X-Men villain Belasco ventures out of that dreadful Limbo place from a Toy Biz Kylun figure and some Super Sculpey.

FREDDY FROM "NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET"

Joe Moore III of Knox, Tenn.

The blood-curdling, hellish, demonic and just-plain-evil Freddy stripped the flesh from a McFarlane Toys maskless Spawn figure. And the deadly claws are sharp and vicious painted toothpicks (mm-wha ha haaa) attached with clay.

BABY DEATH

T. Lawrence of Norfolk, United Kingdom

Check out this version of Death in the form of Disney's Little Pocahontas from Mattel Toys. See, Disney can even spin death in a cute way. Damn, they're good.

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs (**No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!**), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even e-mail address to:

SUBMIT!

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Entertainment
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

CONTEST

TOP COW PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS:

Oh-So-Scary Witchblade!

WITCHBLADE™

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One Stephen King wins a page of original *Witchblade* art by the book's new regular penciler Randy Green, all the different cover versions of the *Songs of Witchblade: A Soundtrack to the Comic Book* music CD signed by the various artists, a complete set of Witchblade action figures including at least one of the exclusive figures and the *Witchblade/Darkness: Family Ties Collected Edition* signed by creators Marc Silvestri and Michael Turner.

FIRST PRIZE (10): Ten Clive Barkers each win the Witchblade action figure and the *Witchblade/Darkness: Family Ties Collected Edition* signed by creators Marc Silvestri and Michael Turner.

WINNING THESE GREAT PRIZES IS EASIER THAN SAYING "TRICK-OR-TREAT!" It's Halloween time and nothing says Halloween like a real scary ghost story. So here's what you have to do to win the goods—write a ghost story starring Sara Pezzini. Make it real scary, the scarier the better. Just don't make it too long because we have to read them all. The ones that give us goose bumps will be chosen as the winners. Just make sure to include Sara in your story. Get to it, Dean Koontz!

TOP COW PRODUCTIONS, INC.

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY THOSE SWELL FOLKS AT TOP COW PRODUCTIONS.

HORRIFIC LAWYER STUFF

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Top Cow Productions, their immediate families and Jamie Lee Curtis. Why are you picking on our good buddy Michael Myers? Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Oh-So-Scary Witchblade!" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your fright-filled magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by November 30, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected entries or entries mutilated by Jason Voorhees. Aren't you dead yet? Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than January 1, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected, and Freddy Krueger will haunt your dreams. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about December 11, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after December 11, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Oh-So-Scary Witchblade!" Contest Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and put it in an envelope. Send it to:

"Oh-So-Scary Witchblade!" Contest,
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

"Oh-So-Scary Witchblade!" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE NOVEMBER 30, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ E-Mail Address _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY?

POPULARITY CONTEST

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS DEATH SCENES

Hey, it's Halloween! So in the ever-popular blood 'n' guts tradition of the holiday, we proudly present...COMICS' TOP 10 GORY, GRISLY DEATHS! When we check out, dear God, let's hope it's not in a way that looks like *any* of these:

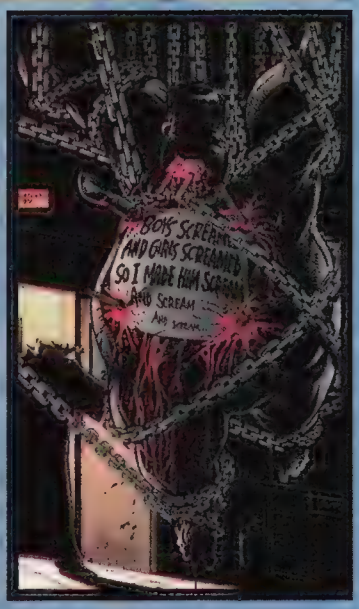
* NOW *THAT'S* SCARY-LOOKING!

1 SAVIOR SPLAT!

Ouch! The descendant of Jesus and some poor random soldier guy get splatted by 800 pounds of ugly fat in the form of Allfather D'Aronique falling from a helicopter in *Preacher* #24.

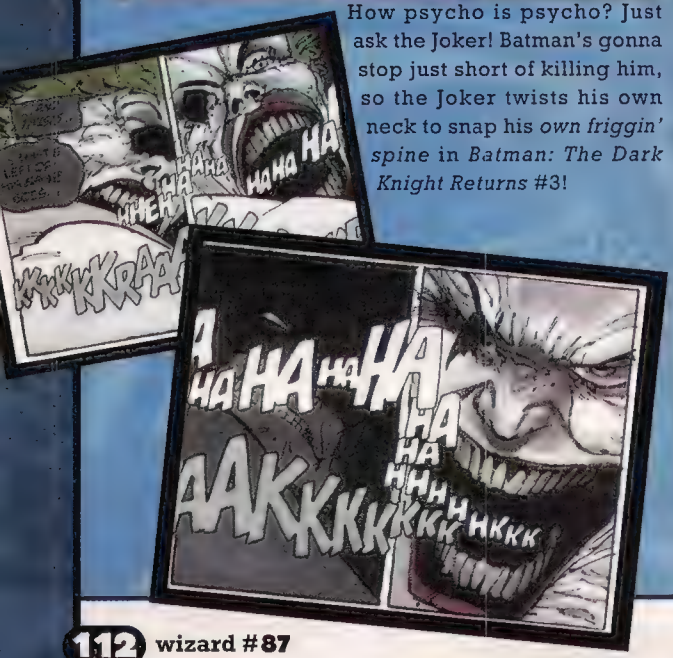
2 31 FLAVORS OF DEATH!

Convicted child killer and former ice-cream man Billy Kincaid just got sprung from the joint on a technicality. But when Billy starts going after children again (and Spawn's daughter, little Cyan Simmons, in particular), it ain't like Spawn is just gonna sit by and watch it all happen. Spawn dishes out justice to Billy by giving him a double scoop of his own medicine in *Spawn* #5. Now *that's* cold!



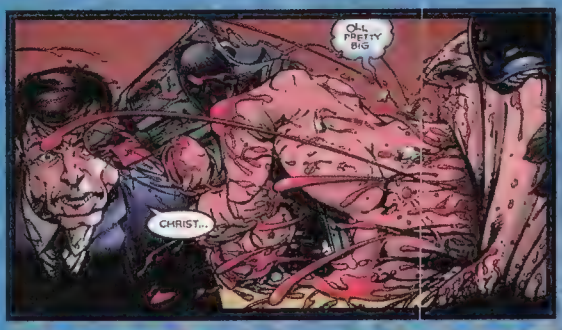
3 KILLER SMILE!

How psycho is psycho? Just ask the Joker! Batman's gonna stop just short of killing him, so the Joker twists his own neck to snap his *own friggin' spine* in *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* #3!


HA HA HA
KKKKKRAA
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
AAKKKK

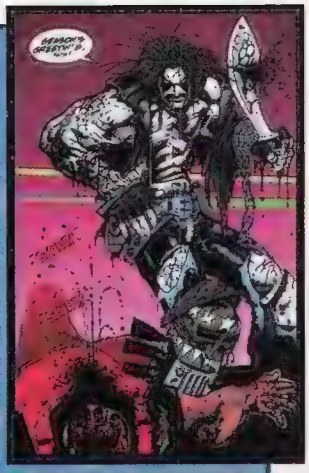
5 HEAD FIRST!

Tommy the mobster gets the Violator's fist (And a gun!) shoved through the back of his head and out his mouth in *Violator* #1.

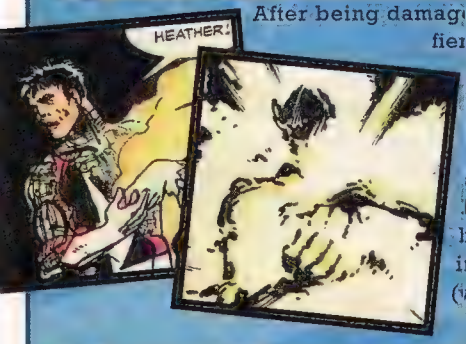


6 SEASON'S BLEEDINGS!

The Easter Bunny's not too crazy about all the competition he's been getting from a certain jolly holiday icon and well-known chimney-diver. So he contracts Lobo to whack Santa Claus! The Main Man ain't gonna get nothing but coal in his stocking after the *Lobo Paramilitary Christmas Special*. And to all, a good night!



7 SNAP, CRACKLE, POP!



After being damaged something fierce in combat, Guardian's battle suit short-circuits and he burns alive! Smells like Canadian bacon to us in *Alpha Flight* (v. ol. 1.) #12.

8 ON ICE!

A major bad-ass named Major Force ain't too happy. So he kills Kyle Rayner's girlfriend Alex — and stuffs her in a 'fridge for Kyle to find! It's chilly stuff in *Green Lantern* #54.

9 DRIVE-THRU DRIVE-BY!

Here's an order that's not on the menu! A giant, grotesque fat guy gets shot to bits— and then blown up by a hand grenade!—at a Burger Bucket franchise in *Hitman* #24. Pass the napkins, please.

10 DOG EAT DOG!

Marv cuts the legs off of Kevin the cannibal and lets Kevin's dog *eat him* to death in the first "Sin City" yarn. See *Dark Horse Presents* #62 and report for obedience training.

MORT OF THE MONTH

ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

I.Q.

Ira Quimby, or "I.Q." (Get it? They're his initials!), was a stupid criminal who somehow got really, really smart when he came near an alien rock. With his sudden burst of intelligence, I.Q. crafted amazing devices to commit crimes, which invariably led to his getting his ass handed to him by Hawkman. Repeatedly.

And like every good DC supervillain, I.Q. sports white gloves and scarf by Giorgio's of Beverly Hills, shades from the 1973 "Superfly" catalog, boot jets borrowed from Wile E. Coyote and what looks like a load in his pants.

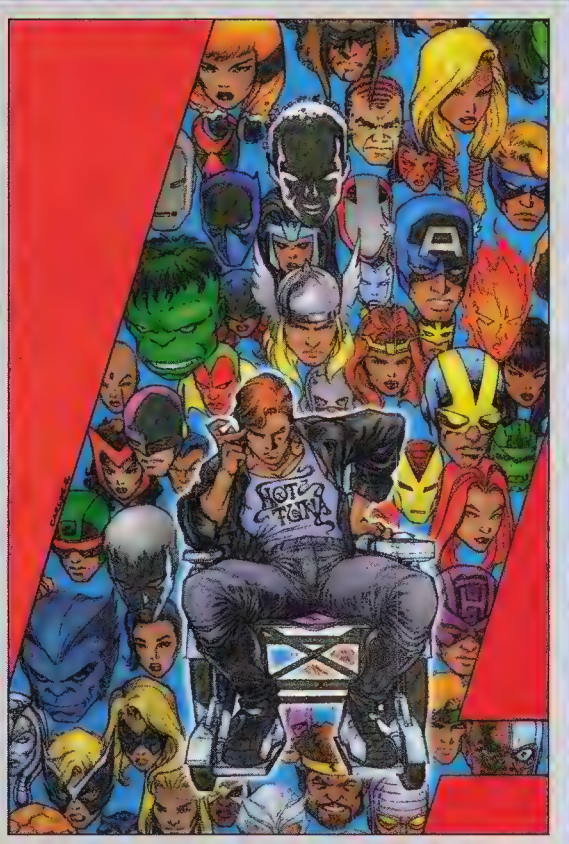
I.Q.? Looks like this guy could use a few points more.

MORTOMETER

PICKS

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN OCTOBER

book of the month



AVENGERS FOREVER #1 (OF 12)

MARVEL Present, past and *future* Avengers? Smells like time travel to us, and your tour guides are writer Kurt Busiek and artist Carlos Pacheco. "It's the ultimate Kang-Immortus conflict," says Busiek. "Oh, yeah—and every Avenger you know, plus some you *don't*, shows up." Seems the time-traveling villain Kang is fighting his future self, Immortus, across time. And Pacheco promises that this time-travel story counts: "There will be characters you've never seen before, and they are planned to be part of the future of *Avengers*." $2.99

AKIKO #29

SIRIUS Yoodoo bird? What the hell is a yoodoo bird? We dunno. But Akiko and her pals better find out, 'cause without the rare and precious egg of the yoodoo bird, Bornstone ain't gonna give them the rare potion that'll cure Mr. Beeba's dying buddy. Enough explanation! Say it loud and say it proud: Yoodoo bird! Yoodoo bird! Yoodoo bird! By Mark Crilley. $2.50

AQUAMAN #50

DC COMICS Who's the king of the sea? Aquaman! And it's happy birthday time for the king. "No, you can't light candles on a cake underwater," says writer Erik Larsen. "But people come from all over DC's underwater world for the party anyway." That gets to be a bit of a problem, though, as many party-goers decide they'll *stay* in Atlantis after the shindig. "They're the guests that won't leave," Larsen adds. "And Atlantis can't quite hold them all. The traditional Atlanteans are kinda narrow-minded and Aquaman suddenly has racial tensions to deal with." By Larsen, Eric Battle and Norm Rapmund. $1.99

AVENGERS #11

MARVEL What's that funky smell? No, it's not a comic convention—It's rotting superhuman flesh! Seems the ghosts of superheroes past are haunting Avengers Mansion, as such dead Avengers as The Swordsman and Captain Mar-Vell stalk the halls. Who's behind it all? Looks like the Grim Reaper, that big jerk! By Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. $1.99

BATTLE CHASERS #6

CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE Gully, the little 'Chaser with the mighty gauntlets o' power, learns a bit more about how her potent gloves work...and about what happened to her father. That's all well and good, but while we're explaining stuff, just how the hell does Red Monika's bra work? Is it hydraulic or something? Inquiring minds want to know. By Joe Madureira, Munier Sharrieff and Tom McWeeney. $2.50

BOX OFFICE POISON #11

ANTARCTIC PRESS It's Christmas in...October? Things move fast in *Box Office Poison*. And just like in reality, Christmas can suck in this reality-based comic about jobs, relationships and, heck, even comics. Ed, the wannabe

MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

comic artist, gets stuck with his family. And Irving Flavor, the burned-out Golden Age artist, spends Christmas dinner with his cat. Bah humbug. By Alex Robinson. **$2.95**

CASTLE WAITING #7

OLIO Ever wonder what the "real" lives of fairy-tale characters are like? Writer/artist Linda Medley tells us in every issue of *Castle Waiting*. In this issue, we belly up to the bar. "Chess, the knight of our castle, and Rackham, the steward of the castle—he's kinda like an administrator and butler rolled into one—take a trip into town for a night at a tavern," Medley says. There, they run into all sorts of nasties, including drunken loudmouths and crooked gamblers. And a battle of the sexes breaks out. "Chess arm-wrestles Sally Port, the barmaid," Medley says. "He's a big, manly man, so he's not gonna want to lose to a woman. But Sally's tough." By Medley. **$2.95**

DAREDEVIL #2

MARVEL Babysitting sucks. Just ask Daredevil. A woman named Gwyneth has just left him in charge of her baby. Why? Well, there's this group of wackos tryin' to off the little tyke because he might be the eventual savior of mankind...or mankind's eventual doom. And *no one* seems to know for sure which one he'll turn out to be! Okay, so maybe Kevin Smith, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti know. **$2.50**

FLASH #143

DC COMICS The mysterious new villain Cobalt Blue is lookin' to trash the Flash quick-fast. But if the Flash had passed high-school chemistry, he'd realize that cobalt's atomic number is only 27, and there are 76 elements that can kick cobalt ass, including the entire lanthanide and actinide series'. Professors Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Pop Mhan and Chris Ivy will be giving a quiz, so take notes. **$1.99**

AQUAMAN #50

newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

AQUAMAN SECRET FILES #1 **(DC Comics)** Arthur's origin is retold and deep-sea travelers get a map of Atlantis for only **$4.95**

BATMAN/JUDGE DREDD: DIE LAUGHING #1 **(DC Comics)** A Joker duplicate pops up in Dredd's Mega-City One and the Judge calls 1-800-BAT-MANN for help. **$4.95**

BATMAN: DARK KNIGHT OF THE ROUND TABLE #1 **(DC Comics)** It's "Elseworlds" time, and if Camelot is gonna survive, a dark knight called Batman is gonna have to save it. **$4.95**

DEADPOOL BOOKS **(Marvel)** Widdle Wade–the *baby* version of Deadpool–pops up in *Deadpool Team-Up*. Sick 'n' twisted games, puzzles and even paper dolls are the order of the day in *Baby's First Deadpool Book*. And the *Encyclopedia Deadpoolica* contains more tech info than you can shoot a rocket-propelled grenade launcher at. **$2.99 each**

GREEN LANTERN 3-D #1 **(DC Comics)** Kyle Rayner gets sucked into the Green Lantern Power Battery in this 3-D one-shot sure to put your eye out. **$3.95**

HELLCOP #1 **(Avalon/Image)** Some jobs just suck. Guarding the gate between Earth and Hell is one of them. But Virgil Hilts–the Hellcop–has a great dental plan, so what the hell. **$2.50**

LEGENDS OF THE DC UNIVERSE 3-D GALLERY #1 **(DC Comics)** It's the JLA. It's 3-D. It's tons of artists. It's only **$2.95.**

MARTIAN MANHUNTER #1 **(DC Comics)** The JLA's resident alien is hot on the trail of a serial killer in Seattle. **$1.99**

SUPERMAN: WAR OF THE WORLDS

SECRET ORIGINS 80-PAGE GIANT #1 **(DC Comics)** The origins of Young Justice (Impulse, Robin and Superboy) are laid bare and Robin's girlfriend, the Spoiler, makes a surprise appearance. **$4.95**

SLINGERS #1 **(Marvel)** Spider-Man's "Identity Crisis" identities–Ricochet, Hornet, Prodigy and Dusk–are now a team in their own title. **$2.99**

SPIDER-MAN: CHAPTER 1 #1 **(Marvel)** Second verse: Same as the first! Revamp maestro John Byrne gives us a fresh look at Spidey's earliest days. **$2.50**

SUPERMAN: SILVER BANSHEE #1 **(DC Comics)** The ghostly Banshee wants to be free of her cursed existence and only the Man of Steel can help. **$2.25**

SUPERMAN: WAR OF THE WORLDS **(DC Comics)** Martians attack! Superman comes to save the day! And Orson Welles is nowhere to be found! **$5.95**

UNION JACK #1 **(Marvel)** Some guy dressed like the British flag kicks butt in WWII England. **$2.99**

WOLVERINE: BLACK RIO **(Marvel)** Wolvie goes to Rio, dances in a conga line and runs into biker zombies from hell! This kinda stuff *always* happens to him! **$5.99**

X-FORCE/CHAMPIONS '98 **(Marvel)** The current X-Force and the swingin' '70s superteam called the Champions team up in this wacky annual. **$3.50**

GREEN LANTERN #107

DC COMICS So Kyle Rayner, our resident Green Lantern, has this power ring. It can do anything he wants. But instead of using it to make an unlimited supply of green Cheez-Its, he figgers that he wants to use it to make a bunch of power rings. That way, all his friends can be Green Lanterns, too. And creators Ron Marz, Jeff Johnson, Chris Batista and Terry Austin can tell us all about it. "By the end of this issue," Marz promises, "someone we know and love—but who has never worn a Green Lantern ring before—winds up with a ring. We've got a second Green Lantern on our hands!" We've also got the villainous Sledge, who Marz says, "makes an appearance to just generally show up and break things." Hey, with a name like "Sledge," what else would you expect? Collateral damage is cheap at **$1.99**.

HITMAN #32

DC COMICS Tommy (the Hitman), Natt (the guy with the cool hat), Ringo (the world's deadliest assassin) and Hacken (that lovable idiot who chopped off his own hand) are working as mercenaries for the King of Tynanda. Unfortunately, the king didn't tell them about the giant helicopter gunships they'll be encountering this issue. Just another example of The Man keepin' ya down! By Garth Ennis, John McCrea and Garry Leach. **$2.50**

IRON MAN #11

MARVEL COMICS
After takin' a hurtin' at the hands of the Mandarin last ish, Tony Stark (a.k.a. Iron Man) heads to Seattle to drop by a Starbucks and pick up the new Screaming Trees CD. But he runs into Carol Danvers (Warbird), who's kinda miffed that he got her booted outta the Avengers for being an alcoholic. Definitely not a good day for Tony. By Kurt Busiek, Sean Chen, Larry Stucker and Eric Cannon. **$1.99**

JLA #24

DC COMICS Hey, kids! It's the Ultra-Marines! And when these new government super-soldiers try to capture the indestructible body of the JLA's old foe (and former "Mort of the Month"!) Shaggy Man, the JLA decides to remind them that stealing just ain't polite, and they should really cut out that kind of anti-social behavior. By Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell. **$1.99**

JLA/TITANS #1 (OF 3)

DC COMICS Hey, can't we all just get along? Maybe not. You'd think the Titans (that's Nightwing, Flash, Tempest, Arsenal and Donna Troy) would play nice-nice with the JLA, 'cause they got a common foe to face. "An intergalactic threat appears to be taking over the moon, which, yeah, would probably concern Earth's heroes," says writer Devin Grayson. Said threat seems to be gunning for everyone who was *ever* a Teen Titan. Let's see...Flash was a Titan, and now he's a JLA'er. "So the JLA interpret this as an attack on them," Grayson says. But the JLA plan of attack on the big baddie kinda conflicts with the Titans' plan and wacky hero-fightin'-hero hijinks ensue. By Grayson, Phil Jimenez and Andy Lanning. **$2.95**

JLA: YEAR ONE #12

DC COMICS In this double-sized hullabaloo, Superman, Batman, the original Green Arrow, the Atom, the Justice Society, the Blackhawks, the Challengers of the Unknown, the Doom Patrol and Sparky the Wonder Chimp all guest-star. And somewhere in there the fledgling JLA fight off an alien invasion. Mark Waid and Brian Augustyn write. Artists Barry Kitson and Michael Bair get blisters on their fingers. **$2.95**

MAGE: THE HERO DISCOVERED BOOK I & II

IMAGE COMICS Holy guacamole! After what seems like 53 years in nowhere-land, the original *Mage* series is back in print! *Thrill* to the origin of Kevin Matchstick, wielder of the mystic baseball bat! *Chill* at Kevin's battle with the evil Gracklefints! *Spill* your Diet Coke when you check out the curves of Edsel, Kevin's chick sidekick! A Matt Wagner joint at 56 pages and **$5.95 each.**

NIGHTWING #26

DC COMICS Nightwing looks into the mysterious deaths of crooked union bosses and the trail seems to lead straight to...Huntress? Hey! But ain't she supposed to be one of the good guys? Uh...good girls? Whatever. Just ask Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. They oughtta know. **$1.99**

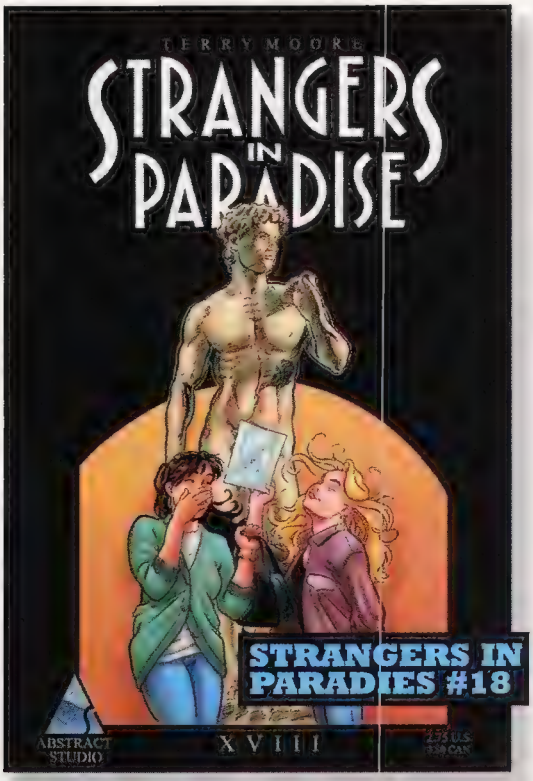
PREACHER #44

VERTIGO/DC COMICS There's a new sheriff in town and his name's Jesse Custer. Our resident preacher is now the law in the town of Salvation. But the local meat baron (Now *there's* a dirty joke waiting to happen!) don't take too kindly to Jesse's new Texas order. So he's preparing a little surprise for the preacher. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $2.50**

ROBIN #59

DC COMICS It ain't easy being Robin. The poor kid's always pulling double shifts. Like this issue f'r instance. As superhero Robin, he's gotta rescue his friends from the villainy of Steeljacket! And as young Tim Drake, he confronts a shock-

ing secret from one of his classmates. Sounds like time-and-a-half material to us. By Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Stan Woch. **$1.99**



SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #68

VERTIGO/DC COMICS "The Goblin," Part 4 (of 4). The twisted psycho freak known as the Goblin is stealing babies like they were hotel towels or something. But the Golden Age Sandman isn't in any shape to stop him. He's over in the corner babbling in tongues! What goes on here? Maybe Steven T. Seagle will tell us. "The Sandman is facing his worst enemy—The Sandman," Seagle says. Seems the personal stresses of the last few issues are finally getting to ol' Wesley Dodds and he's going rather insane. "Yeah, he's on the edge of obliterating everything he loves and holds dear," Seagle says. But Seagle also says we get the big payoff this issue. "This one is a true mystery, as we like to do sometimes," he promises. "And we've set people up so that they *think* they know the identity of the Goblin. But they're all wrong. I say that with great confidence." The bad guy is unmasked on October 21. Be there. By Seagle and Guy Davis. **MR $2.50**

SAVAGE DRAGON #54

IMAGE Dragon's back from the dead! Or is he? Let's examine the evidence: There's a big green guy running around Chicago. He's got a fin on his head. And he's helpin' the She-Dragon out. Looks like the real McCoy, but writer/artist Erik Larsen won't confirm or deny until you fork over **$2.50.**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #18

ABSTRACT STUDIO Hi. Welcome to the future. About 10 years in the future. The Cubs still haven't won a World Series and that computer "millennium bug" wasn't as bad as everyone thought it was gonna be. And oh, yeah—Francine and

alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

BATMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #80/*Azrael: Agent of the Bat* #47 is a funky "flip-book" that puts us on the road to the next giant Bat-crossover, "No Man's Land." Meanwhile, Mr. Wayne goes to Washington to get the feds to pony up earthquake relief for Gotham (Good luck) in *Batman* #560, and Robin takes center stage in *Detective Comics* #727. **$1.99 each;** *SotB/Az* **$3.95**

BLACK PANTHER #2 (Marvel) No kiddin': Mephisto gives Everett K. Ross (who Marvel dubs "king of useless white boys") the devil's pants. We can't make this up. **$2.50**

CAPTAIN AMERICA #12 (Marvel) Cap is stuck in the realm of nightmares where teenage boys dream of showing up for school without their pants. **$2.99**

CURSE OF THE SPAWN #26 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) It ain't no '50s horror movie: He's Dr. Marc Simmons, brother of Spawn! **$1.95**

THE DARKNESS #19 (Top Cow/Image) Duck! Hitman Jackie Estacado is the target of about a billion other hitmen. **$2.50**

DIVINE RIGHT #8 (WildStorm/Image) It's a family affair as Max Faraday's mentor, Tobruk, takes on his bad-ass brother, Lord Acheron. **$2.50**

FANTASTIC FOUR #12 (Marvel) Crucible has stolen Reed Richards' brain! The FF better get it back or no one'll be able to program the VCR. **$2.99**

FATHOM #3 (Top Cow/Image) Tensions rise between the American and Japanese factions of DMD, and Aspen's stuck smack-dab in the middle. **$2.50**

GEN[13] #34 (WildStorm/Image) Gen-chicks Freefall and Rainmaker are stranded on a desert isle. Meanwhile, the professor makes a radio out of coconuts and Mary Ann bakes a banana cream pie. Mmmmm. Pie. **$2.50**

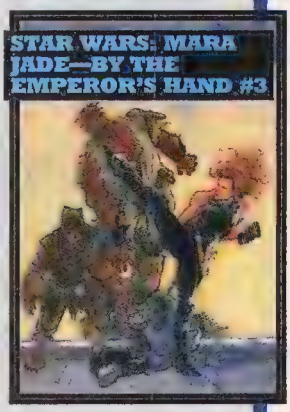
INHUMANS #2 (Marvel) It's coming-of-age time as 13-year-old Yonaje is exposed to the mutating power of the Terrigen Mists. **$2.99**

KISS: THE PSYCHO CIRCUS #14 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) We get a glimpse of an ancient Japanese version of the "Four-Who-Are-One." That's KISS, dummy. **$2.25**

PUNISHER #2(Marvel) Whoopsie! The Punisher gets hints that his war against crime might actually just be the manipulations of someone...evil! **$2.99**

SPAWN #79 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) Someone's whackin' bums and Spawn ain't too happy about it. Expect revenge. And blood. **$1.95**

STAR WARS BOOKS (Dark Horse) Mara busts outta prison in *Star Wars: Mara Jade–By the Emperor's Hand* #3. Exiled Jedi Ulic Qel-Droma trains young Vima in *Tales of the Jedi–Redemption* #4. The Rogues take on both Imperial fighters and ground troops in *X-Wing Rogue Squadron* #35, and we see Luke Skywalker's new recruits in *Jedi Academy* #1. **$2.95 each**



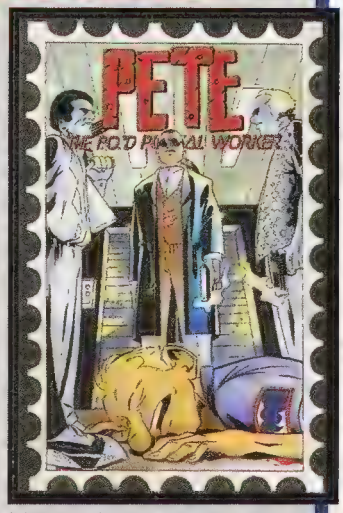
SUPERMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Ron Marz (*Green Lantern*) guest-writes the Super-books this month as Supes, Ashbury and Scorn enter an enlarged chunk of the Bottle City of Kandor that pops up in Metropolis. *Action Comics* #749, *Superman: The Man of Steel* #84, *Superman* #140 and *Adventures of Superman* #563 are your stops. They're **$1.99 each.**

WITCHBLADE #27 (Top Cow/Image) Gah! We thought he was dead! Kenneth Irons comes back lookin' to kick Sara Pezzini's shapely butt. **$2.50**

WOLVERINE #132 (Marvel) Wolvie tells a ghost story to the X-crew. We bet that little sissy-man Cannonball wets his pants. **$1.99**

PETE THE P.O.'D POSTAL WORKER #6

(SHARKBAIT PRESS) Start with Cliff Clavin from "Cheers." Now hop him up on beef-producing livestock steroids, put him in a cage and poke him repeatedly with a stick. Only now can you *begin* to imagine the rage that is Pete, the P.O'd Postal Worker!



The fur flies when someone uses Pete's beloved U.S. Postal Service as a drug pipeline and frames Pete for the trafficking! What will happen when the zealot of the ZIP code meets...Benedict Postman? We dunno. We're busy reading junk mail. By Marcus Pierce Jr. and Pete Garcia. **$2.95**

Katchoo are back together again after a decade of separation! What drove them apart in the first place? Maybe you'll find out in this comic by Terry Moore. **$2.75**

SUPERMAN ADVENTURES #26

DC COMICS Mr. Mxyzptlk, that crazy other-dimensional imp, decides that the best way to defeat Superman is to travel back in time and beat the Man of Steel before he ever *becomes* Superman. Time travel? But that trick *never* works! Sigh. By Mark Millar, Aluir Amancio and Terry Austin. **$1.99**

SUPERMAN FOR ALL SEASONS #4 (OF 4)

DC COMICS Looks like the country mouse has finally become a city mouse. Smallville bumpkin Clark Kent (That's Superman to you, ya yahoo!) completes his first year in Metropolis and pays a quick visit to the ol' hometown. And who's he run into there? Why it's his first-ever girlfriend Lana Lang, who's the point-of-view character for this issue. By Joseph "Jeph" Loeb III and Tim "Tim" Sale I. "Lana's voice is probably the closest to Clark's at this point in his young life," Loeb says. "The story reveals that Clark and Lana both left Smallville on the same night, but for very different reasons. Now they both come back to Smallville, but as very different people. Still, Lana's the closest to him in terms of understanding what he's all about and who he is." Nice to have one o' them kindred spirits, eh? **$4.95.**

THOR #6

MARVEL In this corner: The Mighty Thor! In that corner: Hercules, Prince of Power! Verily, this be a tale of battle destined to rock Asgard and Olympus alike, told by Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson! "Thor's still looking for the missing Asgardian gods," Jurgens explains. "So he figures, 'Hey! I'll go to Olympus and ask Papa Zeus. He's got the cosmic antennae up.' Only problem is, when he hits Olympus, Hercules is there hoisting a cold one and impressing the ladies. He doesn't like Thor interrupting his fun, and mayhem breaks out in the merry Marvel manner." **$1.99**

THUNDERBOLTS #21

MARVEL Just ta show ya that chicks are completely irrational creatures that can snap like a dry twig at the drop of a hat, Songbird goes bonkers this ish. Will the Thunderbolts be able to stop her? Will this lead to a member leaving the team? Will Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna say? Nope. Then again, they never do. **$1.99**

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #16

VERTIGO/DC COMICS "Year of the Bastard," Part 4 (of 6). The worst possible thing just happened to rogue journalist Spider Jerusalem: He's famous! Now he's gonna have to deal with that which he hates most—people! AAAUU-UGGGHHH! By Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. **MR $2.50**

UNCANNY X-MEN #362

MARVEL The "Hunt for Xavier" begins as the X-folks start looking for their missing mentor, Professor Charles Xavier. The search party's led by Steve Seagle, Chris Bachalo and Tim Townsend. "A mysterious delivery to the X-Mansion gives the X-Men a lead as to where Charles is," explains Seagle. And where's that delivery come from? Looks like all the way over in merry old England. But the X-Men have to make a side-trip before hopping the pond. "Somewhere in the Midwest, big fat flames in the shape of an 'X' appear," Seagle adds. Could be a desperate cry for help from Pyro, the evil mutant dying of the Legacy virus. Or maybe...it's a trap! You can find out for **$1.99**

USAGI YOJIMBO #24

DARK HORSE COMICS A small farming village is threatened by a supernatural killer who taunts his victims with haunting flute music (No, it's not Yanni!) before he kills them. And the only one who can save the day? Usagi Yojimbo, the giant samurai bunny rabbit! Woo hoo! But it looks like, this time, Usagi's gonna have to sheathe his sword and use his wits to save the day. By Stan Sakai. **$2.95**

X-MEN #82

MARVEL The "Hunt for Xavier" continues (duh) and the X-Men find...two Charles Xaviers?!? But who'd wanna clone a bald guy confined to a wheelchair? The X-Men better find out toot-sweet, or both Xaviers just might bite the giant green burrito of death. We don't even wanna think of the gas! By Joe Kelly, Adam Kubert and Mark Farmer. **$1.99**

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

THE DARKNESS

BAD TO THE BONE: Jackie once seeped The Darkness into a villain's nose and pulled the skeleton right out of his body. (#4)

WEAKNESS: Captured by his enemy the Angelus in the daytime, Jackie was screwed. His powers don't work in sunlight. (*Darkness* #3)

CLONING: Jackie created a Darkness duplicate of himself to battle the Angelus. It got disemboweled while Jackie got away. (#14)

AUGMENTED STRENGTH: The Angelus learned about The Darkness' strength when he ripped out her wings with just one arm. (#6)

ABILITIES: The Darkness can snake through cracks and crevices...like the time it sucked a rival down a toilet while the man was using it. (#2)

ARSENAL: Heck, The Darkness has come up with grenades, double-barreled machine guns and even snarling fly-trap monsters. (#10, *Witchblade* #18)

INVULNERABILITY: The Darkness protected Jackie from a full-power magic blast by the Angelus. (#14)

ABILITIES: If Jackie can imagine it, The Darkness can create it. He's made tiny mischievous Darkling imps and even tried to make women, a disgusting failure. (#7)

JOCK ITCH: The Darkness is inherited from father to son. If Jackie gets a woman pregnant, the power leaves his body and he dies. (#2)

ORIGIN

When Mafia hitman Jackie Estacado turned 21, the mysterious shadow powers of The Darkness took over his body...and made him a target for the supernatural forces of this world. Determined not to be a pawn in a cosmic war, Jackie went off on his own to live a normal hitman's life. That means bumping off rival bad guys, talking tough and driving fast cars. Forget the babes, thoaugh (see Jock Itch, above). Trouble's tracked him down since in many forms, including Witchblade Sara Pezzini and warrior nun Magdelena.

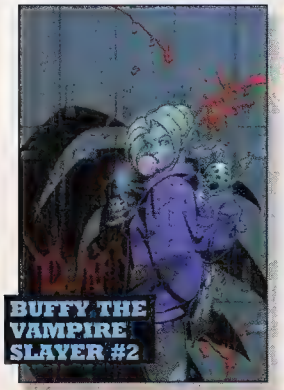
NOW APPEARING

November's *The Darkness* #20 is going be a blood-spattering good time with the conclusion of the two-part "No Mercy" story. While #19 sees every hitman gunning for our pal Jackie, #20 sees an end to his current troubles.

"In #20 Jackie discovers who put the price on his head and why, and he learns that this is going to happen every year for the rest of his life," explains editor David Wohl. "For a 24-hour period, every hitman is taking a shot at him to get this huge bounty, so expect a lot of violence. In this issue, Jackie's going to be raising a *lot* of hell."

GORE picks

READING FOR THE GRATEFULLY DEAD AND RIGHTEOUSLY BURIED...


BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER #2

BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN HC

(DC COMICS) It's a looooong Halloween, as Batman tries solving a series of monthly holiday-related murders committed by a serial killer named Holiday. It's death, mystery, pumpkins and more in this hardcover reprinting the original 13-issue miniseries. **$29.95**

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER #2

(DARK HORSE) Hunt for Halloween sweetness—and bloodthirsty killers on a rampage—as teen-dream Buffy and her pals head out for some trick-or-treating. By Andi Watson and Rick Ketcham. **$2.95**

CRIMSON #6

(CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE) Daddy dearest is the prisoner of a crazed vampire, and little boy bloodsucker Alex must team up with his hated enemy Red Hood to rescue his parental unit. By Brian Augustyn, Humberto Ramos and Sandra Hope. **$2.50**

DRACULA: LORD OF THE UNDEAD #1-#3

(MARVEL) He's dead—and loving it! Dracula returns to his Transylvania home and must confront his great threats in the form of a deadly plague and his lifelong enemy, Dr. Charles Seward. By Glenn Greenberg, Pat Olliffe and Tom Palmer. **$2.99**

GENERATION X/DRACULA '98

(MARVEL) Dracula is the busiest man in comics...but not so busy he can't make the lives of the mutant teens in Generation X a *bona fide* hell. Corpuscles, anyone? By Joseph Harris, Tomm Coker and Troy Hubbs. **$3.50**

GIANT-SIZE ACTION PLANET HALLOWEEN SPECIAL #1

(ACTION PLANET) Hey kids! It's better than getting an apple in your trick-or-treat bag. It's 48 pages of Halloween fun with Monsterman, rotting Little Stiffy, the mysterious Wretch and others. By Bret Blevins, Mike Manley, Bill Wray, Phil Hester and more! **$5.95**

THE GIRL WHO WOULD BE DEATH #1

THE GIRL WHO WOULD BE DEATH #1

(VERTIGO/DC COMICS) Haunted young woman Plath attempts to rescue her boyfriend from...you guessed it, the Big Sleep. Comin' at ya from Caitlín R. Kiernan and Dean Ormston. **MR. $2.50**

HELLBLAZER #132

(VERTIGO/DC COMICS) He's a corpse and a creep. In the middle of a gang war, little lifeless Ronnie Cooper makes a bid to kidnap the man who brought him back from the grave, John Constantine. By Garth Ennis and John Higgins. **MR. $2.50**

LADY DEATH #10

(CHAOS!) Let's get ready to rumble! It's Lady Death versus the voluptuous vampire Purgatori. By David Quinn and Steven Hughes. **$2.95**

LADY DEATH #10

SERGIO ARAGONÉS: DAY OF THE DEAD

(DARK HORSE) *El dia de los muertos es una celebración muy mysteriosa.* Yep, celebrate and discover the Mexican holiday "Day of the Dead" with Sergio Aragonés and Mark Evanier. **$2.95**

THE SUPERNATURALS #1-#4

(MARVEL) In a world where all non-magic-powered superheroes have vanished, Brother Voodoo must gather a team of creepy young heroes (Ghost Rider, Black Cat, Gargoyle, Satana, etc.) to battle famous monsters and save the universe. By Brian Pulido, Marc Andreyko, Ivan Reiss and Joe Pimental. **$3.99**

VAMPIRELLA #11

(HARRIS) Call the paramedics: Vampirella is donning a new costume to fight her hated enemy Mistress Nyx and an army from the planet Drakulon. By Malachy Coney, Louis Small Jr. and Gary Martin. **$2.95**

VAMPS: PUMPKIN TIME #1

(VERTIGO/DC COMICS) It's time to fire up the Harleys. Skeeter the motorcycle-riding vampire beauty is wanted by a group of vampire assassins and they're ready to kill to get to her. Are Skeeter's vampire chums, the Vamps, ready to give up their pal? Hmm...could be. By Elaine Lee and Will Simpson. **MR. $2.50**

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REPORT card

COMIC BOOK REVIEWS

BY *WIZARD* EDITORS BRIAN CUNNINGHAM, ANDREW KARDON AND MIKE SEARLE

THE AVENGERS

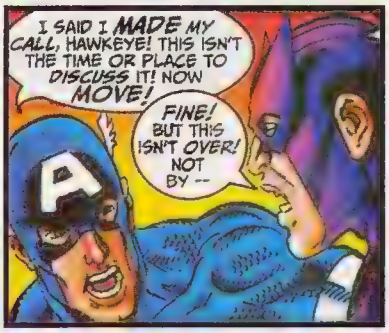
Where are Earth's Mightiest Villains?

ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#8
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Marvel Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Kurt Busiek, George Pérez, Al Vey
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: The Avengers—Captain America, Firestar, Hawkeye, Iron Man, Justice, Thor, Vision and Warbird—are Earth's mightiest heroes protecting the world from threats no one superhero could stand against.

The Good: The characters make *Avengers* great. Whether it's Cap barking orders to hold the team together against terrorists as he does in issue #8 or a robotic-yet-sensitive Vision as he talks with the Scarlet Witch (#4), the characterization is dead-on. Even Jarvis has a personality beyond "trusty butler." It's fun to see these characters together again. And a big thumbs up to a varied roster which includes the team's Big Three (Cap, Thor and Iron Man) mainstays (Hawkeye, Vision and Scarlet Witch) and rookies (Justice and Firestar).

Take those characters and throw them into a group full of team tension and complex relationships and it gets even better. Hawkeye, who thinks he's not being treated with respect, gets in Cap's face (#6). An alcoholic Warbird rips into everyone when they hold a tribunal to decide whether she's worthy of staying an Avenger (#7). Scarlet Witch is torn in a love triangle between Vision and a believed-dead Wonder Man that only she can conjure back to life (#8).



Plus, *Avengers* is full of cool moments. A battered Thor arrives dramatically to enlist the Avengers' aid, but not in time to stop all of reality from unraveling by the end of issue #1. Wonder Man is unexpectedly resurrected at the end of issue #2. The new Avengers fight a mind-controlled Squadron Supreme in one of the coolest fight scenes in comics today (#5). All this, of course, is accomplished with artwork so gorgeously detailed that you'll find yourself going back and re-reading issues to catch everything that's going on.

The Bad: The Avengers are Marvel's #1 super-team, so they should be tackling the toughest foes this side of Galactus. So far the choices have been a bit suspect: Morgan Le Fay, Whirlwind, Imus Champion, The Corruptor, a rebel band of Kree soldiers and terrorists led by Moses Magnum? These guys are far from the most awe-inspiring heavyweights.

Other than issues #1 and #2 which ended with great cliffhangers, the following six issues' plots haven't hit us with enough drama to make us desperate to pick up that next issue. Right now, the character interaction is what's carrying the book.

The Buzz: The team of white-hot creators Kurt Busiek and George Pérez. Top 10 book. Smash hit. 'Nuff said.

The Skinny: While the characterization is engaging and artwork is stunning, the plots come up short when the Avengers fight third-rate villains like Imus Champion and a holographic Moses Magnum. Let's see Ultron or the Masters of Evil. *Avengers* is one dramatic villain away from greatness. ■

There's a surprising amount of tension on this team, which makes for great reading.

Now THAT's what we call an Avengers roster!

THE GRADE: A-

GREEN LANTERN

Worth the hype?

ISSUES REVIEWED: #97–#106
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: DC Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Ron Marz, Darryl Banks, Jeff Johnson, Paul Pelletier, Terry Austin and Bob Wiacek
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.95/Monthly (except #101–#106 biweekly)

What You Need to Know: Early in his career, a young Green Lantern (Hal Jordan) is accidentally sent from the past to our present. Current GL Kyle Rayner explains to Jordan that he (Jordan) will one day become the villain Parallax and ultimately sacrifice himself to save the Earth. Things get real wacky when Parallax himself shows up and takes on the two GLs.

The Good: Hal Jordan's back and we love him! Beyond the sheer thrill of having a "good" Jordan back, he's a neat character who's written well. His reaction to Coast City's destruction, Parallax's mad attempts at recreating the universe, and even his reunion with his girlfriend Carol Ferris were handled beautifully.

Kyle himself is still a great character. His internal dialogue which narrates many of the issues lets you inside his head to see that he's just a good-hearted fun kid with a pretty powerful ring. And it's great to see Kyle use his power ring to create a different object each time, playing off the fact that he's a freelance artist.

The main storyline, Hal being trapped in the present, is a great scenario. How do you tell a good guy like Hal that he's got to go back in time so he can one day transform into the mass-murdering villain Parallax and ultimately sacrifice himself to save the Earth? Man, that's rough.

The Bad: This book is inconsistent. Yeah it's got great characterization and dialogue, but its plots are hit or miss. Issue #99, concluding Kyle's trip to the future, was kinda weak, except for the fact that it eventually sent Kyle back to Hal's time period. Issue #102 with Kalibak seemed like a filler issue that only served to have Hal meet Carol in the present—not enough to fill 22 pages. Issue #104's crossover with the modern Green Arrow seemed like nothing more than a gimmick to team the original GL with the new GA. (Not to mention the fact that there was hardly any recap on the first part of the crossover which took place in *Green Arrow* #136.) The Hal Jordan six-issue "Emerald Knights" storyline could have easily been a four-parter.

Unfortunately, with any time travel story, you've got the inevitable time-travel paradox. Parallax gives up in the end and returns to his time because Kyle tells him that he'll ultimately sacrifice himself to beat the Sun Eater and save the universe. Why couldn't Parallax just head to his future to take out the Sun Eater in the first place? Or go back in time and ensure that Coast City was never destroyed so he doesn't have to *become* Parallax?

The Buzz: *Green Lantern* was THE book of the summer. Thanks to Hal's return, the title has soared up the charts and everyone's got an opinion on whether Kyle or Hal should be GL.

The Skinny: Great characters and characterization are unfortunately mixed with very inconsistent plots. You're either left with a great read or nothing more than filler. ■

Hal's reaction to his fate is well-done. But it wouldn't have to be this way if not for those pesky time paradoxes...

THE GRADE: B-

QUICKSILVER

Not so fast

ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#11
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Marvel Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Tom Peyer (#1-#6), John Ostrander (#7-#11), Joe Edkin (#5-#11), Derec Aucoin and Rich Faber
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.99/Monthly

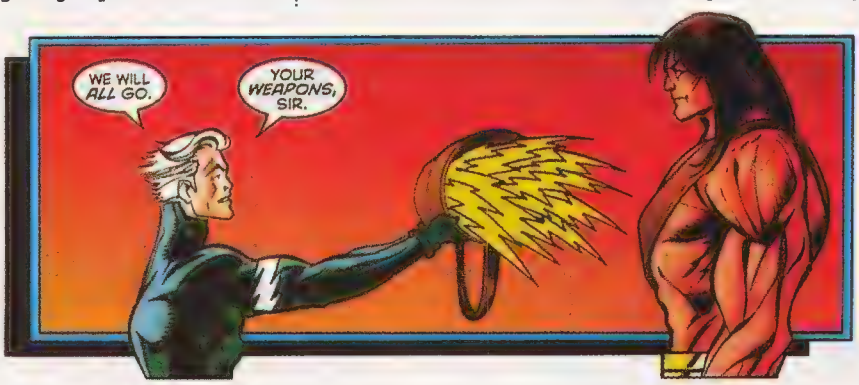
What You Need to Know: Son of the mutant conqueror Magneto, the mutant speedster Quicksilver is finally reunited with his wife Crystal and given the reluctant role leading the Knights of Wundagore—a group of animals genetically mutated by the High Evolutionary and trained to be heroes.

The Good: Issue #4 offers a good glimpse at what it's like to be a speedster. At dinner with the Inhumans, Quicksilver attempts to eat reeeeal slowly, taking very measured and controlled bites. Yet when he's done, everyone else has barely started. It's a good display of characterization for a character whose life is perpetually in fast forward.

The Bad: We like Quicksilver...and this ain't Quicksilver. For some reason, the speedster's former personality—that of a lovable, quick-tempered arrogant jerk—has been totally swept under the rug and forgotten about. Instead, we're left with a boring, sensitive and responsible guy. And to make matters worse, this so-called Quicksilver hardly appears in the book. Instead, he takes a back seat to one of the worst supporting casts in all of comicdom: the Knights of Wundagore (a.k.a. the New Men). They are talking, "evolved" animals with swords, and they've got even less personality than Quicksilver.

Besides the New Men, the Acolytes (X-Men villains) show up, as do the Inhumans *and* the Heroes for Hire. That's a heckuva lot of characters to throw into one title, especially when it's not even a team book! New readers will be completely overwhelmed with issue #1, which featured more than 15 characters.

As for the plots, just like the characters involved, they're dull and, ironically, very slow-moving. The main thrust of the series is that the Acolytes are out to destroy the High Evolutionary for creating mutant abominations, and Quicksilver and the New Men are out to stop him. That's it. After 11 issues, both sides are *still* fighting. Besides being bogged down with way too many characters, the series spends a lot of time in the past. Issue #5 ended in a neat cliffhanger (the Inhuman Black Bolt actually spoke), but #6 started off with three pages of droning flashback before picking up where the last issue ended, and #7 is just loaded with flashbacks. Not to mention the lame-ass villains in this series, such as Thundra and Arkon the Imperion. Hoo boy.



The Buzz: Thanks to the recent "Live Kree or Die!" crossover with *Iron Man*, *The Avengers* and *Captain America*, this below-the-radar title saw a big surge...for one month at least.

The Skinny: This book is trying way too hard to be an X-title. It's got a tremendous amount of characters, lots of mutants and even X-foes like the Acolytes. Unfortunately, there's a serious lack of characterization (Quicksilver's mishandled portrayal being a key example) and plots to put them in. ■

Aww, ain't that sweet? It's too bad the real Quicksilver would never be so giving or kind as the one in this series.

Why does the series' star take on a supporting role as a member of the Knights of Wundagore?

THE GRADE: D-

USAGI YOJIMBO

Indiana Jones meets 'Shogun'

ISSUES REVIEWED: #13-#22 ("Grasscutter" storyline)
GENRE: Fantasy action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Dark Horse Comics
CREATOR: Stan Sakai
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.95/Monthly

What You Need to Know: In a 17th century Japan populated by anthropomorphic animals, Miyamoto Usagi (a.k.a. Usagi Yojimbo, i.e. "rabbit bodyguard") is a masterless samurai rabbit fighting evil wherever he can. When he discovers the ancient sword Grasscutter, an artifact with the power to disrupt Japan's whole political system, his world's entire future is at stake.

The Good: "Indiana Jones meets *Shogun*" best sums up "Grasscutter." From high-octane sword battles (main characters can get hurt...badly) to well-researched Japanese lore to a clever ending, "Grasscutter" is a thrilling and fun ride.

Within the story, the characters are fun to read. Sure, Usagi's the straightforward hero, but you gotta love a rabbit who goes against tremendous odds for Japan's greater good. On the opposite extreme, there's Jei, an evil, demon-possessed master samurai who watches over an innocent little girl who calls him "uncle," and Ikeda, a simple peasant farmer who is a former leader in hiding. It's curious characters like these who suck you right in.

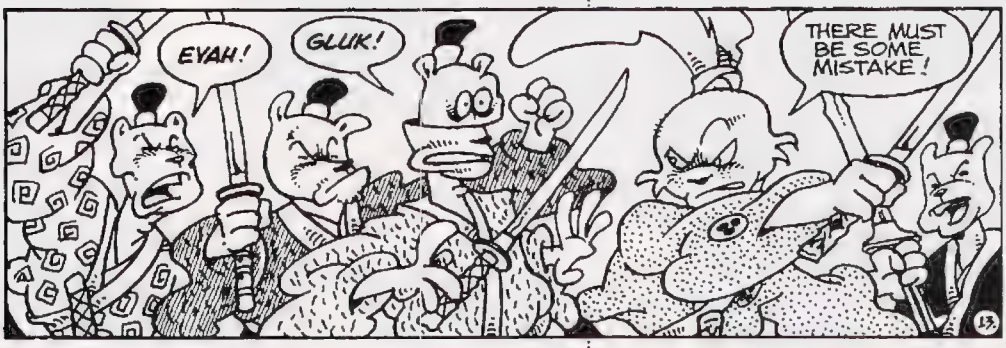
What's more, there's true depth to *Usagi* and its characters that echo past storylines—you don't have to read prior issues to understand "Grasscutter," but this story makes you want to.

The Bad: The series just isn't accessible to new readers. The "Grasscutter" storyline kicks off with a two-issue prologue (#13-#14) that delves into Japanese myth and the real history of 12th century Japan—majorly confusing without a Japanese history book nearby—and never once mentions or shows the story's main characters! Once the actual storyline kicks into gear, you get lost in a political arena which isn't explained well enough. Answers to simple questions such as "What's the difference between an emperor and shogun?" need to be laid out more clearly.

More confusion stems from mistaken identities. Lady Tomoe and Inazuma are both female, feline samurais with similar-looking bodies and faces—in fact, we thought Tomoe *was* Inazuma, as they're both introduced in issue #15 within a few pages of each other. Without better visual clues (especially in a black-and-white comic), it's hard to follow the characters properly through the story.

The Buzz: With 10 paperback editions (the first seven by Fantagraphics Books; the last three by Dark Horse) and a Usagi action figure on the way, *Usagi Yojimbo* is definitely in a position to be read by the masses.

The Skinny: *Usagi*'s "Grasscutter" is a great story that's bogged down by a lengthy prologue. Also, new readers (like us) might not understand 17th century Japanese society or might mix up characters who look too similar; why not have a story recap and a "who's who" roll call on the inside front cover? Despite these difficulties, we're not only anxiously awaiting the next story arc, but we'll pick up those paperbacks as well.



This sword fight gives new meaning to the term "splitting headache."

Usagi's characters make this series. When General Ikeda stands revealed, it makes you want to read past issues to see how he got to be a mere peasant.

THE GRADE: B

actionfigures

toys

anime

music

videogames

attitude

cuddle this!

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join our mailing list to win a chance for a free trip to the STAR TREK EXPERIENCE at the LAS VEGAS HILTON

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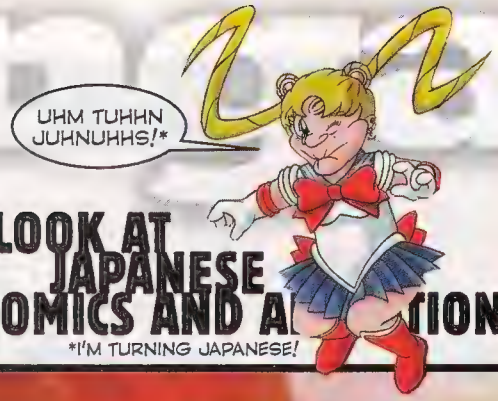


MANGA FROM THE CRYPT

'Wizard' picks morbid manga to menace the mind

It's October, and that means it's time for ghastly tales of ogres lopping off the heads of schoolgirls, wars between vampire clans and the rapacious appetites of man-eating mermaids. In brief, it's time for horror, manga-style.

OGRES...

An ogre born in the form of a young man has walked the Earth for centuries seeking ogres to destroy, armed with the sword that gives him his only name: "onikiri maru," the Ogre Slayer. He believes that only when the last ogre has fallen to his sword can he be made mortal. Alas, his task is all but impossible because ogres are born of human suffering and evil, and there is no shortage of that in the world.

Like many classic horror tales, Kei Kusunoki's *Ogre Slayer* stories are morality plays. Her primary theme offers that the true source of horror is not the ogres themselves, but the human cruelty and suffering that gives them form. Schoolgirl Chiharu, rejected by her classmates, becomes the willing tool of an infant ogre in exchange for revenge and acceptance. College student Rie, rejected by the boy she's loved from afar, commits suicide in one final attempt at impressing him. Each falls victim to the ogre's siren and becomes an ogre the Ogre Slayer must fell.

Most of the *Ogre Slayer* tales feature women—students, teachers, reporters and housewives—and the choices they make which bring them into the orbit of ogres. The drama of the series arises from their struggles and occasional redemption. These are creepy stories because they touch on the secret sufferings all humans nurse in the dark.

Ogre Slayer is available as two graphic novels by Viz Comics: *Ogre Slayer* and *Love's Bitter Fruit*, each $15.95.

VAMPIRES...

Vampires are as popular in Japan as they are in the rest of the world, and readers can get their fill from the featured characters in Narumi Kakinouchi's *Vampire Miyu*. *Vampire Miyu* tells the tale of Miyu, a young vampire girl who hovers between the world of Shinma (demons) and the world of men. Together with her Shinma companion and guardian Larva, Miyu protects humans from the voracious appetites of the Shinma—and comes to those in pain and sorrow, offering them release and eternal happiness through a gentle bite.

MIYU FOR U New vampire Miyu likes the Spice Girls, Corey Haim and draining the blood from human jugulars.

Vampire Miyu is a manga with a gothic but ethereal air about it, faintly suggestive of Edgar Allan Poe. The series is laden with melancholy and an over-arching sense of loss. As in Kei Kusunoki's *Ogre Slayer*, many of the human characters carry the burden of some sort of rejected love.

Miyu is an appealing character, in turns playful—her human life ended when she was 13—but also fiercely protective of her human charges and Shinma guardian. There hangs an ever-present air of sadness about her as well—she longs for the life of a normal human girl, a life she has never tasted.

BY PAUL SUDLOW

ANIMEPICK

CREEPY ANIME PICK OF THE MONTH

Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge

(Viz Video, 40 minutes each, $19.95 dubbed or $24.95 subtitled)

A century ago, vampire Lord Dimitri Maximoff was exiled from the demon world and forced to live on Earth. Now, as he plans to make his triumphant return, his human subjects plot to end his reign of terror and return the sun to the world of men.

Catgirl Felicia and zombie-rocker Lord Raptor are the first to taste their wrath, but the humans are no match for the combined might of the two Darkstalkers. Meanwhile, the succubus Queen Morrigan challenges Dimitri's right to rule in a raging air battle. And back on Earth, vampire-hunter Donovan Baine—half Darkstalker himself—acquires a mysterious new companion.

The *Darkstalkers* series—of which this is the first volume—is based on the hit Capcom fighting game of the same name. Character designs are by Shuko Murase ("Street Fighter II: The Animated Movie"). Director Masahi Ikeda made a special effort to integrate the special moves of each character into the action, so fans of the game will get a kick seeing their favorite characters strut their stuff in combat. ■

GROOVY GHOULIES Vampire Lord Maximoff (top right) and his evil minions are out to raise your insurance rates.

Vampire Miyu has been made available by two publishers in America. Antarctic Press ran the original six-issue series—now out of print—in '94 and '95. The continuation of the saga, known as *New Vampire Miyu*, currently runs under the auspices of Studio Ironcat for $2.95 an issue.

AND MERMAIDS...

With such megahits as *Urusei Yatsura*, *Maison Ikkoku* and *Ranma 1/2* under her belt, Rumiko Takahashi is most often identified with comedy manga—and with good reason. But, as readers of her new *Inu-Yasha* series know, Takahashi occasionally gives her darker muse voice—and shows she is equally adept at unnerving her readers as she is in provoking them to laughter.

Takahashi's longest-running horror series to date is her *Mermaid* saga: *Mermaid Forest*, *Mermaid's Scar* and *Mermaid's Gaze*. In the Western world, mermaids are comely lasses who bring sailors good luck and occasionally hang out with singing crabs. In Japan, however, and specifically in Takahashi's tales, they are man-eating monsters who lure men to their doom under the waves.

Turnabout is fair play, however; mermaids might like eating people, but thanks to a legend promising eternal life to those who partake of mermaid flesh, they find themselves hunted as well. The promise of life everlasting proves to be true for a chosen few—like the protagonists Yuta and Mana—but most people who eat the flesh of mermaids mutate into horrible, flesh-eating monsters.

The story settings alternate between contemporary and feudal Japan. The historical tales feature Yuta as he struggles to come to terms with his new-found immortality and the efforts others expend to join him. The modern-day stories focus on Yuta and his new companion Mana—a freshly minted immortal. The series focuses on searching: Yuta searches for a means to resume aging; Mana is eager to explore a world she has never seen; most of the humans are seeking immortality. All seek the mermaid, the key to their quests.

Takahashi's *Mermaid* graphic novels are offered by Viz: *Mermaid Forest* at $16.95, *Mermaid's Scar* at $17.95 and *Mermaid's Gaze* at $15.95.

OH, MY!

There isn't a lot of horror manga in America yet, so the list of possibilities is far from exhausted. For a bigger bite of carnage, check out *Parasyte*, (Mixxzine); *3x3 Eyes*, *Lycanthrope Leo* (Viz); CLAMP's apocalyptic tale *X/1999* (Viz); and even Kia Asamiya's occult sci-fi tale *Silent Mobius* (Viz). (W)

Freelance writer Paul Sudlow doesn't eat tuna because he suspects mermaid meat is getting into the mix.

F.Y.I.

INFO

All three of the horror manga covered here are available in animated form. As with most horror movies, they're for mature audiences only.

Viz Video offers two *Ogre Slayer* videos–"Ogre Slayer" and "Ogre Slayer 2: Grim Fairy Tales"–at $24.95 each. Two *Vampire Princess Miyu* releases are available from AnimEigo, $16.95 dubbed and $21.20 subbed. Each release contains two episodes. The stories featured in the *Ogre Slayer* and *Vampire Miyu* releases are similar, but not identical, to their manga counterparts.

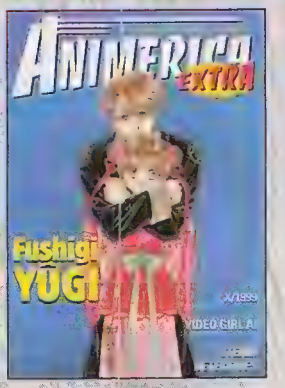
Two videos based on Takahashi's *Mermaid* saga are available. U.S. Manga Corps offers "Mermaid Forest" for $14.95, while Viz Video has released "Mermaid's Scar" for $19.95. These adaptations track with their manga counterparts faithfully, with few deviations.

MANGAPICKS

MUST-READ JAPANESE COMICS SHIPPING IN OCTOBER

Animerica Extra Vol. 1 #1

VIZ COMICS

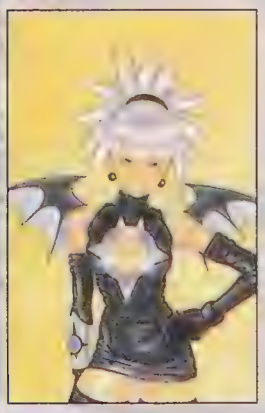


Animerica Extra is Viz's new manga anthology, showcasing some of the hottest shonen and shojo (girls' and boys' respectively) manga titles demanded by American fans. *Steam Detectives* and *X/1999*—which are moving over from other Viz magazines—are familiar titles. The big news is the two new titles, *Fushigi Yugi* and *Video Girl Ai*. The former is a tale of two girlfriends transported to another world to find love, war and their destinies, and the latter offers Masakazu Katsura's romantic, sexy and occasionally tragic tale of first loves. It's lotsa cool manga for cheap! **$4.95**

Shadow Lady #1

DARK HORSE

Masakazu Katsura fans will think they've died and gone to heaven. This month sees the debut of not one but *two* of his manga! *Shadow Lady* is one of his more recent titles. It features the exploits of shy and demure Aimi who becomes the infamous thief Shadow Lady when she dons magic eye shadow given to her by a sidekick devil guy named De-Mo. Katsura is a huge, *huge* fan of Batman, and attentive readers will catch homages to Catwoman, Gotham City and the Dark Knight himself among the pages of *Shadow Lady*. **$2.50**



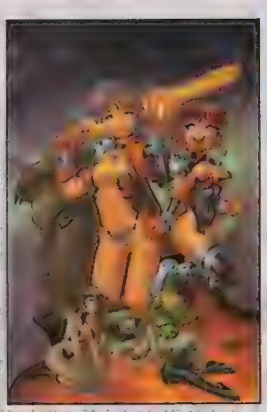
Gen[13]: Magical Drama Queen Roxy #1

WILDSTORM/IMAGE

Well, as long as we're on the subject of American superheroes, time to take five and head over to the Image bullpen, where Adam Warren is busy cranking out a very weird and funky *Gen[13]* three-part mini-series. Seems Roxanne Spaulding has a strange dream in which she is a magic girl *á la* "Sailor Moon"—complete with sailor suit and wand o' power. Trapped in the Mall of Doom, she's gotta use her special powers to escape and protect her beloved Prince Edward of Grunge. Fans of Warren's "Grunge: The Movie" from last year's *Gen[13] Bootleg*, will love this wacky puppy. **$3.50**

Mystic Edge #1

ANTARCTIC PRESS



Sticking with the "manga done American style" theme, here's a peppy "girl duo of doom" title by Yan Kinnaird. Risa and Symatta are smart 'n' sassy bounty hunters who, despite their charms and wit, find themselves incarcerated. Their only chance at freedom comes at the other end of a dicey assignment: slipping past the deadly defenses of an ancient tomb and returning with its treasures. Lovely. Except the only thing worse than the nasty techno-horrors guarding the tomb are their dubious traveling companions! **$2.95**

Black Magic trade paperback

DARK HORSE

A few months ago Dark Horse dipped into Eclipse's manga vaults to reprint the first *Dirty Pair* graphic novel, and it's doing it again this month with the release of Masamune Shirow's *Black Magic*. Shirow's first comic, *Black Magic* is a tale of the far future in which bio-mechanical creations and cyborgs have become part of the food chain. Whether or not they wind up above or below humans is up to wild-card agent Typhon. Early renditions of Shirow trademarks include a strong female lead, bio-mechanical beasties and a fascination with the ancient Greeks. **$16.95**

Slayers #1

CPM COMICS

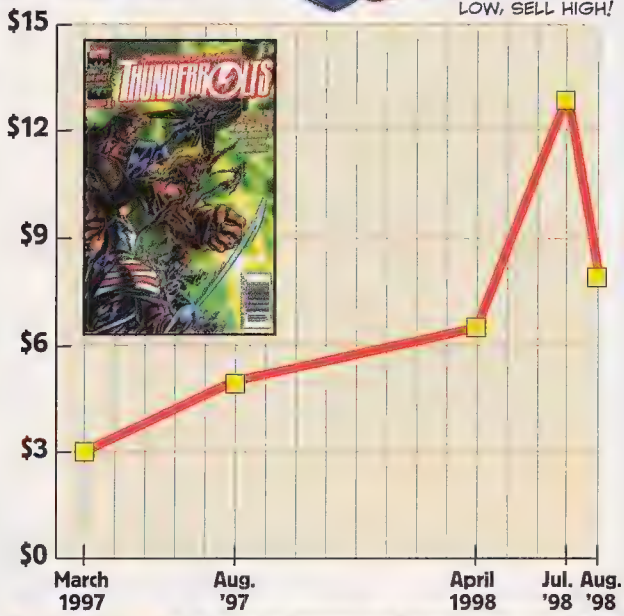
Spitfire mage Lina Inverse and her slightly dim buddy-in-arms Gourry Gabriev have made quite a splash on the anime scene, and this month they're making their big American manga debut. Naturally, they can't go for long without getting into trouble, and a dispute over a fish soon leads to a battle royale. Art and story are by series creators Hajime Kanzaka and Rui Araizumi. **$2.95**

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

HIGH SPEED AT SAN DIEGO CON

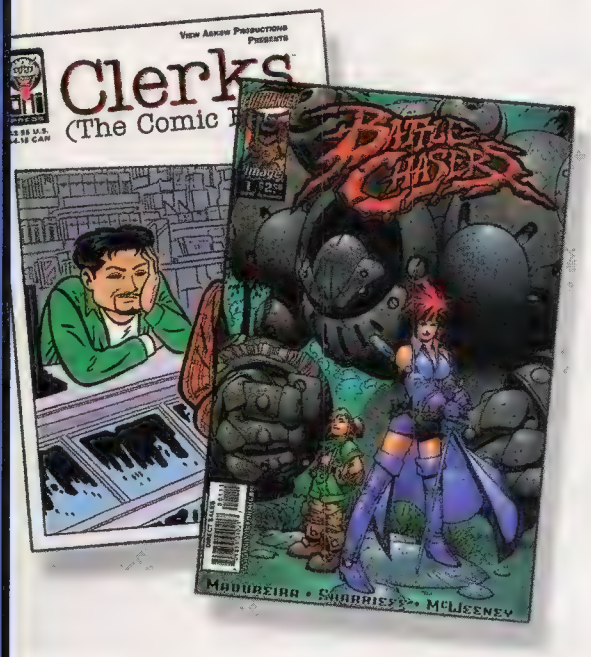
'Battle Chasers' scores big; 'Thunderbolts' nose-dives



LIGHTNING STRIKES *Thunderbolts* #1 was on a steady rise until new copies were found in a warehouse. (Source: *Wizard* Comic Book Price Guide)

San Diego? For most people, it's sun, fun and battleships in the harbor. But if you're attending the San Diego Comic Con, it's four days of hot-'n'-heavy comic book buying and selling. Here are the main trends one could observe from the San Diego retail floor—which will have impact nationwide, even in this month's price guide:

• **Battle Chasers #1**—Easily the top book of the convention, all—and we mean *all*—*Battle Chasers* variants were absolutely roasting. The regular cover, the "butt cover," the Chromium cover—it didn't matter which, they all blew out the door.



• **Thunderbolts #1**—At Wizard World '98 in Chicago, *Thunderbolts* #1 was selling in the $15 neighborhood. But the book saw a huge price dive shortly afterward when Diamond Comic Distributors discovered a forgotten supply of *Thunderbolts* #1 first prints. The stash was only a few thousand copies, but since retailers bought them with their normal discount for about $1.50 each, most chose to turn a fast buck. A wave of *Thunderbolts* #1 sold for $3 to $4 in San Diego, which was accompanied by a spiraling down of prices across the nation.

• **Clerks #1; Jay and Silent Bob #1**—"Clerks" movie writer/director Kevin Smith is way popular and has done far too little comic book work for these books to *not* be hits. *Clerks* #1 is so hot, it's moving up in price despite going into four (!) printings.

• **Divine Right**—Even artist Jim Lee's popularity might not save this one. Many fans say *Divine Right* is confusing. But even more say the book is woefully late. When these two factors combine, readers often defect *en masse*. And at San Diego, such was the case.

• **Tomb Raider/Witchblade; Witchblade #25 Gold, #25 Chrome**—The market seems to run hot and cold on high-priced *Witchblade* books, but a consistent rising gem is the *Tomb Raider/Witchblade* one-shot. With a sequel on the way, many readers are just now buying

this issue. Meanwhile, the retailer-incentive *Witchblade* #25 Gold Edition and #25 Chrome Edition both hit at San Diego and were selling fast at rapidly changing prices.

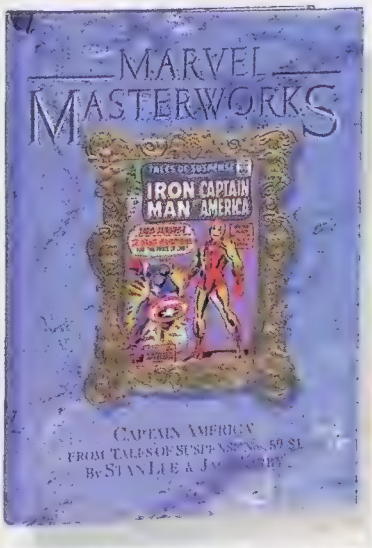
• **KISS: The Psycho Circus #1; JLA #1**—Prices have stabilized on *KISS: The Psycho Circus* #1 and *JLA* #1 at about $10 and $18, respectively. But just because there's no price increase, don't think these books are dead. At the end of the day, they're still fast movers and still sell well.

HARDBACKS SEEING STRONG PRICES

They're more than just reading copies.

Comic book hardcovers never go up in price, right? They're just reprint material. Well, that was true until certain *Marvel Masterworks* books started doubling and even *tripling* in price.

The Silver Age Marvel tales reprinted in *Masterworks* are among the most revered stories ever, and so incredibly expensive as originals that even most hard-core collectors know they'll never own all of them. These factors are finally driving demand for out-of-print *Masterworks*, which sported low print runs in the first place due to their high



HARD COVER, EASY SELL *Marvel Masterworks* have started doubling, even tripling, in price.

$30 (or even $40) cover prices.

Marvel Masterworks Volumes 18 and 26, reprinting Thor's first adventures from *Journey Into Mystery*, are shooting up the highest, pricing at $125 and $75, respectively. Thor's popularity level when these were ordered was kinda blah, but the recent *Thor*

TOP 10 CREATORS

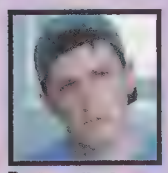
FAN FAVORITES

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top 10 Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Kurt Busiek
Avengers, Astro City

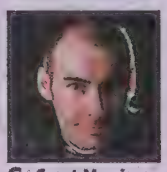
2. Mark Waid
Captain America, Flash



3. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman

4. Joe Kelly
X-Men, Deadpool

5. Kevin Smith
Daredevil, Jay & Silent Bob

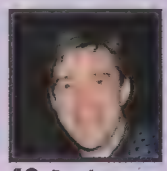


6. Grant Morrison
JLA, Invisibles

7. Steven T. Seagle
Uncanny X-Men, Alpha Flight

8. Ron Marz
Green Lantern

9. Peter David
Supergirl, Young Justice



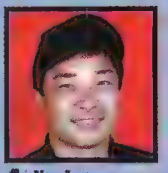
10. Dan Jurgens
Thor, Superman

ARTISTS

1. Joe Madureira
Battle Chasers

2. Michael Turner
Fathom

3. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl



4. Jim Lee
Divine Right

5. Alex Ross
upcoming: *Superman: PoE*

6. Andy Kubert
Captain America

7. George Pérez
Avengers

8. Adam Kubert
X-Men

9. Chris Bachalo
Uncanny X-Men

10. John Romita Jr.
Thor, P. P.; Spider-Man

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS

VIRUS #1

A movie will almost always make its comic predecessor–where one exists–jump in value. So collector eyes will open when "Virus" (starring Jamie Lee Curtis) hits theaters. Reason? A largely forgotten Dark Horse *Virus* mini-series from 1993.

When "Men in Black" became a 1997 movie blockbuster, issues from Aircel's *Men In Black* mini-series started trading for $60 to $75. *Virus* had more copies printed than *Men in Black*, but it still had a ludicrously small print run compared to potential demand. And #1 is selling for less than a small movie-theater popcorn. Don't miss out. ■ **LP**

PHOTOS: ©ISTOCK, NELLY, SMITH, DAVID; ADAM KUBERT, LEE, MADUREIRA, ROSS, TURNER; WAID, BACHALO BY PAUL SCHRAMUN, MORRISON BY BOB BARTHIN; ANDY KUBERT BY C. BLANKENSHIP; PÉREZ BY BRIAN SMITH; SEAGLE COURTESY OF STEVE SEAGLE; MARZ BY JOSEPH SCHULVER; JURGENS BY WIZARD; CAMPBELL BY SARAH HEE

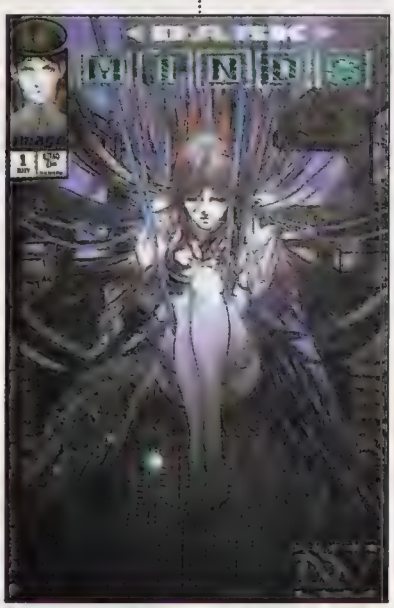
relaunch has generated lots of interest. Daredevil trails the Thunder God with his first stories in Vol. 17 going for $100 these days, and two rapid gainers are Vols. 14 and 20, reprinting Captain America/Iron Man stories from *Tales of Suspense*. They price at $75 each, and many other *Masterworks*, especially the later, lesser-ordered volumes, are creeping up quickly.

Two DC hardcover items generating interest are the famed *Kingdom Come Slipcase Edition*, soaring along in the $100 range, and the first printing of *Sandman: Seasons of Mist* hardback with the leather cover and gold key design. A first-print *Seasons* is an easy $75 item when still sealed in its original plastic.

'DARKMINDS' SEES THE LIGHT

It was something most readers were in the dark about.

Darkminds, a futuristic story about two detectives in hot pursuit of a serial killer, was a comic few fans knew about. True, the comic had the Image imprint and offered a manga-style story from North American creators, but the title and its creators, Pat Lee and Adrian Tsang, were totally unknown to comic book readers. *Darkminds* looked like just another go-nowhere launch.



MANGA MANIA *Darkminds* took the market by surprise. Will it keep going up?

But the response to this new title from manga-hungry fans has been overwhelming. Upon release, *Darkminds* scorched its way through comic shops, trading for $8 to $12 *within one week of its release!* It helped that *Darkminds* #1 shipped with two covers, but for the most part, fans simply wanted a copy. Any copy.

Be warned: *Darkminds* #1's success likely will pale in comparison to the rush to get *Darkminds* #2. Demand is already high, and #2 was ordered too lightly, placing at No. 120 on Diamond's sales chart for August. *Darkminds* #3 could be similarly low. Don't be left in the dark on this one, kids.

Former Iowan and Wizard *Price Guide manager Lars Pearson does his best work in the dark. 'Course, his best work is cow-tipping.*

RETAILER NETWORK & V.I.P.s

RELIABLE SOURCES

Bruno Andreacchi
B.A.'s Comics & Nostalgia
121 Oxford St. East London
Ontario, Canada N6A 1T4
(519) 439-9636

Chris Barchuk
Wizard World
Rockland Center
51 E. Rt. 59
Nanuet, NY 10954
(914) 624-2224

Dave Braunstein
Eldorado Comics
2110 E. Rt. 70
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
(609) 489-1199

Rich Conley
Heroes & Fantasies
914 Pat Brooker Road
Universal City, TX 78148
(210) 945-9884

D. Roberts & J. Walker
Legends Comics
Kentucky Oaks Mall
5101 Hinkleville Rd.
Paducah, KY 42001
(612) 822-2806

Dash Hobbeheydar &
Mark Laskowski
And Then it Rained Comics
P.O. Box 11041
Scottsdale, AZ 85271
(602) 990-9224

Steve Huber
Galaxy Comics
10 North 36th Street
Richmond, IN 47374
(765) 962-8239

Brian Kozicki & John Cathell
Buried Under Comics
188 West Middle Turnpike
Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 643-7295

Ivan Matos
Comic Connection
2128-C Fort Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

Ron McClure
American Comics and Cards
6787 Lee Highway
Chattanooga, TN 37421
(423) 490-0501

Avrom Oliver
Adventures in Comics & Games
6026 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 973-9064

Jerry Ringi
Amazing Fantasy
4300 Portsmouth Blvd.
Suite 192
Chesapeake, VA 23321
(757) 465-8390

Tom Shea
TJ Collectibles
160 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-5874

Steve Snyder
Central City Comics
1460 Bethel Rd.
Columbus, OH 43220
(614) 459-5045

Joel Thingvall
Nostalgia Zone
3149 1/2 Hennepin Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 822-2806

Doug Miers
Comics Conspiracy
115 A. East Fremont Ave.
Sunnyville, CA 94087
(408) 245-6275

Stuart Wagner
Caveman
1344 E. Battlefield
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 882-2283

Robert Scott
Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
5615 Balboa Ave.
San Diego, CA 92111
(619) 278-0371

Nolan Wyatt
Golden Apple Comics
7711 Melrose
Los Angeles, CA 90046
(213) 658-6047

Todd McDevitt
New Dimension Comics
Units 20-21
20550 Rte. 19
Cranberry Township, PA
16066-7520
(412) 776-0433

Phil Davis
B & D Comic Shop
802 Elm St. South West
Roanoke, VA 24016
(703) 342-6642

Damon McCulloch
Comics & Comix
6135 Sunrise Blvd.
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 969-0717

Robert Letscher II
Key Comics
PO Box 3855
Scottsdale, AZ 85271-3855
(602) 949-8499

John Chrusckinski &
Bruce Ellsworth
Tropic Comics
313 S. State Rd. #7
Plantation, FL 33317

James Elkins
Comic Connection
21280 Ft. Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

David Beauchamp
Penguin Comics
3315 S. Welwood
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 551-2051

John Graziano
Comics Plus
1383 Highway 35
Middletown, NJ 07748
(908) 706-0102

Mark Thompson
Cold Cuts
5704 Calmor Ave. #1
San Jose, CA 95123
(408) 229-0930

Jamie Graham
5 East Chicago Ave.
Naperville, IL 60540
(630) 778-0700

Mike Johnson
Golden Apple
7711 Melrose Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Brian Johnson
All About Books & Comics
517 E. Camelback
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 277-0757

RETAILER NETWORK A-1 Book Exchange in St. Louis, Mo.; Back to the Past in Livonia, Mich.; Bali Book Store in Alhambra, Calif.; Beyond Comics in Medford, Ore.; Bob's Cards and Comics in Buzzard's Bay, Mass.; Book Barn in Joplin, Mo.; Book Trader in Minot, N.D.; Bookman's Used Books in Flagstaff, Ariz.; C & C Cards & Comics in St. Albans, W. Va.; California Card Company in Elk Grove, Calif.; Cards Coins & Comics in Davenport, Iowa; Clark's Comics in Hong Kong; Classic Comics in Philadelphia, Pa.; Classic Comics #2 in Philadelphia, Pa.; Collection Connection in Greensboro, N.C., Collector's World in Anderson, In; Comic Archives in Apple Valley, Minn.; Comic Case in Trenton, N.J.; Comic Collector in Riverside, Ill.; Comic Den in Kew Gardens, N.Y.; Comic Encounters in Terrence, British Columbia, Canada; Comic World in Lincoln, Nev.; Comics, Cards and Stuff in Ft. Myers, Fla.; Comics & Cards Trading Post in Montgomery, Ala.; Comics Direct in Niceville, Fla.; Comics Galaxy in Singapore; Comics Plus in Los Banos, Calif.; Comics Plus in Middletown, N.J.; Comics Plus in Ocean, N.J.; Comics Plus in Wanamassa, N.J.; Comics Unlimited in North Bend, Ore.; Comix & More in Chino, Calif.; Dizzy's Dugout in Collinsville, Ill.; Duncanville Bookstore in Duncanville, Texas; E + C Books in Alliance, Ohio; Emerald City Comics and Collectibles in Seminole, Fla.; Excalibur C's., CD's. & G's. in Texarkana, Texas; Fandom's Comic World of Reno in Reno, Nev.; Fun House Toys & Comics in Orleans, Mass.; Golden Empire Bookstore in Bakersfield, Ohio; Golden Unicorn Comics in Hazleton, Pa.; Gypsy Witch Comics in Staunton, Va.; Heroes and Dragons in Columbia, S.C.; Heroes & Fantasies in San Antonio, Texas; Hot Comics East in St. Paul, Minn.; Hudmar Ltd. in Marlboro, Mass.; Independent Comics in Gainesville, Fla.; J & E Cards & Comics Ltd. in Baltimore, Md.; Key Comics in Scottsdale, Ariz.; Kim's Collectible Comics in Seabrook, Md.; Lionheart in Ranchos Palos Verdes, Calif.; Locker Room in East Liverpool, Ohio; Mac's Cards in Vernon, Conn.; Marie's Books & Things in Fredericksburg, Va.; Mr. Green's Comics in Dublin, Calif.; New Age Comics in Chico, Calif.; New Time Machine in Bradentown, Fla.; Night Flight in Salt Lake City, Utah; Nostalgia Zone in Minneapolis, Minn.; 1,000,000 Comix of Idaho in Boise, Idaho; Plus Comics in Roanoke, Va.; Rangeline Comics in Indianapolis, Ind.; Rhino Supreme Comics & Cards in Ridgefield Park, N.J.; Rockabilly Comics in Beverly Hills, Calif.; Rockbottom Comics in Columbia, Mo.; Seventh Star Comics & Gifts in Florence, S.C.; Showcase Collectibles in Alpharetta, Ga.; Showcase Comics & Cards in Selden, N.Y.; Southwest Comics in Del Rio, Texas; TJ Collectibles in Milford, Mass.; Taurus Comics in Port Huron, Mich.; The Card Connection in Columbus, Ohio; The Clubhouse in Encinitas, Calif.; The Comic Shop in Oswego, N.Y.; The Drawing Board in North Plainfield, N.J.; The Gamer's Den in Washington, Mo.; The Main Event in Casa Grande, Ariz.; TNT's Comic Market in Lawrence, Kan.; Twin Book Stores in Morehead City, N.C.; Warren's Bookstore in Lecanto, Fla.; Wilson's Comics & Cards in San Antonio, Texas; Wonder CD's + C's in Montpelier, Vt.; Wonder Years in Alpharetta, Ga.; Woodland Comics & Cards in Woodland, Calif.

TOP 10 COMICS

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

*...MONKEYS...

1. BATTLE CHASERS #1

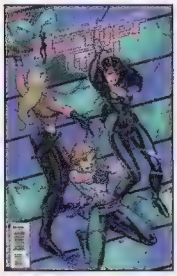
WRITERS: Joe Madureira & Munier Sharrieff
ARTISTS: Joe Madureira & Tom McWeeney

Folks love Joe Madureira more than the Good Humor Man. Who wants an ice-cold rainbow push-up when he can have a blazing hot copy of *Battle Chasers* #1? Nobody, that's who. Hey, what if Joe Mad actually got a job as a Good Humor Man, dispensing ice cream treats AND funky-fresh funnybooks? That'd be the best of both worlds! Unless the comics got all sticky from melted ice cream. That sounds icky. But in a way, it also sounds kinda nummy. **LAST MONTH:** 1

2. DARKMINDS #1

WRITERS: Pat Lee & Adrian Tsang
ARTISTS: Pat Lee, Alvin Lee & Alan Tam

Want proof that the manga revolution is knocking down your door and taking no prisoners? Check out this here American manga title, which zoomed in outta nowhere and rocketed to $10 a pop in the blink of an eye. Of course, the killer art, graphic violence and winsome babes didn't hurt matters any. Then again, they never do. Tune in next month, folks–can the manga underdog finally topple *Battle Chasers* from our trusty list's top spot? *¡Viva la revolución!* **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**



3 DANGER GIRL #1

WRITERS: J. Scott Campbell & Andy Hartnell
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell & Alex Garner

Abbey Chase sure knows how to kick people's asses. And she's a cutie, too! Of course, in real life, chicks who are prone to kick people's asses are usually 250-pound Sherman tanks with scowling faces and mouthfuls of brown teeth. Ew! No wonder Abbey's comic book is so darn successful. At least she brushes. **LAST MONTH:** 2

4 UNCANNY X-MEN #350

WRITER: Steven T. Seagle
ARTISTS: J. Madureira, A. Smith, T. Townsend, V. Russell & D. Panosian

It's shiny and sparkles in the sun, but nobody's takin' it outdoors to play; they're putting it in acid-free-backing-board-Mylar bags. It's a hot X-Men title in the days of low-print runs and everyone and your mom is tucking it away for a rainy day. Yeah, that's right. Your mom. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

5 NIGHTWING #1

WRITER: Chuck Dixon
ARTISTS: Scott McDaniel & Karl Story

It's the simplest of comic book equations: *Nightwing* is picking up fresh readers with every passing month and each newbie wants to get in on the ground floor. That makes for lots of readers chasing limited copies, and you all know what THAT means: *NIGHTWING* FEVER! Class dismissed. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

6 FRANK FRAZETTA FANTASY ILLUSTRATED #2

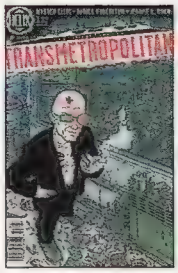
WRITERS: Lotsa guys including Joe Madureira
ARTISTS: Lotsa guys including Joe Madureira

Not only is the fabled Man of Madureira ruling the "Top 10" roost AND handing out frozen treats this month, he's also turning anthology books like this into movers and shakers thanks to the inclusion of a *Battle Chasers* tale. Good work, Joe Mad, now give us an ice cream sammich. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

7 CLERKS #1

WRITER: Kevin Smith
ARTIST: Jim Mahfood

Kevin Smith needs a pen name. The scribe turning the comics world on its ear shouldn't have the same moniker as that jerky kid who sat next to you in math class making throwing stars out of notebook paper. Ugh! Kevin Smith should change his name to K.S. Frenté. Or Joe Madureira. **LAST MONTH:** 7



8 TRANSMETROPOLITAN #1

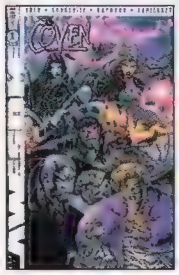
WRITER: Warren Ellis
ARTISTS: Darick Robertson & Rodney Ramos

We kinda already explained this phenomenon in the *Nightwing* write-up (see entry #5): growing readership scrambles for scarce back issues. Of course, *Transmetropolitan* has a lot more screwy shenanigans per square inch than *Nightwing*. And NOTHING makes for good comics like screwy shenanigans. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

9 KISS: THE PSYCHO CIRCUS #1

WRITER: Brian Holguin
ARTISTS: Angel Medina & Kevin Conrad

How long is Gene Simmons' tongue? He could type you a letter with it. He could slap a roach off your forehead from across the room. He could stand on the sidewalk, put a puppet on his tongue and scare the crap out of people on the ninth floor. Gene Simmons is neat! **LAST MONTH:** 5



10 THE COVEN #1

WRITERS: Jeph Loeb & Ian Churchill
ARTISTS: Ian Churchill & Norm Rapmund

Check it out, kids and kidettes: the new *Coven* series will kick up again any day now, and collectors are so jazzed they're scarfing up back issues like Garfield guzzles lasagna. Bleah, did we just make reference to Garfield? One of them *Coven* witches should turn that orange lardass into a throw rug. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **August**

TOP 100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.

The chase is on! *Battle Chasers* #4 rode four alternate covers to a No. 1 showing.

1. Battle Chasers #4 (Cliffhanger/Image)
2. Uncanny X-Men (holographic cover) #360 (Marvel)
3. X-Men (holographic cover) #80 (Marvel)
4. Fathom #2 (Top Cow/Image)
5. Spawn #77 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
6. Avengers #9 (Marvel)
7. Wolverine #129 (Marvel)
8. JLA #23 (DC)
9. Fantastic Four #10 (Marvel)
10. Mutant X #1 (Marvel)
11. Darkchylde: The Legacy #1 (Homage/Image)
12. Captain America #10 (Marvel)
13. Iron Man #9 (Marvel)
14. Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty #2 (Marvel)
15. Thor #4 (Marvel)
16. Amazing Spider-Man #440 (Marvel)
17. Spider-Girl #1 (Marvel)
18. Crimson #4 (Cliffhanger/Image)
19. Divine Right: T.A.O.M.F. #6 (WildStorm/Image)
20. JLA: Year One #10 (DC)
21. Justice League of America: The Nail #3 (DC)
22. JLA Annual #2 (DC)
23. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #96 (Marvel)
24. Generation X #43 (Marvel)
25. Curse of the Spawn #24 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
26. Green Lantern #105 (DC)
27. Green Lantern #106 (DC)
28. Spectacular Spider-Man #262 (Marvel)
29. X-Force #82 (Marvel)
30. Sensational Spider-Man #32 (Marvel)
31. Incredible Hulk #469 (Marvel)
32. X-Man #43 (Marvel)
33. Spider-Girl #0 (Marvel)
34. Cable #59 (Marvel)
35. Tales of the Witchblade #6 (Top Cow/Image)
36. A-Next #1 (Marvel)
37. Ascension #9 (Top Cow/Image)
38. Excalibur #125 (Marvel)
39. Superman #139 (DC)
40. Spirit of the Tao #4 (Top Cow/Image)
41. Young Justice #2 (DC)
42. Superman: Save the Planet (Collector's Edition) #1 (DC)
43. Adventures of Superman #562 (DC)
44. Stone #1 (Avalon/Image)
45. Gen^{13} #32 (WildStorm/Image)
46. KISS: The Psycho Circus #12 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
47. Astro City #17 (Homage/Image)
48. J2 #1 (Marvel)
49. Nightwing #25 (DC)
50. Batman #559 (DC)
51. Detective Comics #726 (DC)
52. Thunderbolts #19 (Marvel)
53. 300 #4 (Dark Horse)
54. Martian Manhunter #0 (DC)
55. Superman: The Man of Tomorrow #11 (DC)
56. Rampaging Hulk #3 (Marvel)
57. Superman For All Seasons #2 (DC)
58. Preacher #42 (Vertigo/DC)
59. Flash #142 (DC)
60. Deadpool #21 (Marvel)
61. Marvel Annual '98: P. P.: Spider-Man & Elektra (Marvel)
62. Green Lantern Annual #7 (DC)
63. Superman Annual #10 (DC)
64. Alpha Flight #15 (Marvel)
65. Robin #58 (DC)
66. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #79 (DC)
67. Superman: The Dark Side #1 (DC)
68. Catwoman #62 (DC)
69. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #111 (DC)
70. Supergirl #26 (DC)
71. Tenth #12 (Image)
72. Wonder Woman #138 (DC)
73. Batman: I, Joker (DC)
74. WildC.A.T.s/Aliens (WildStorm/Image)
75. Star Wars: Mara Jade—By The Emperor's Hand #1 (D.H.)
76. Adventure Comics 80-Page Giant #1 (DC)
77. Batman Villains Secret Files #1 (DC)
78. Lady Death #8 (Chaos!)
79. Legends of the DC Universe #9 (DC)
80. Uncanny X-Men (regular cover) #360 (Marvel)
81. WildCORE #7 (WildStorm/Image)
82. Martian Manhunter Annual #1 (DC)
83. Catwoman/Wildcat #3 (DC)
84. Heroes for Hire #16 (Marvel)
85. Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi—Redemption #2 (D.H.)
86. X-Men (regular cover) #80 (Marvel)
87. Starman #47 (DC)
88. Jim Lee's C•23 #5 (WildStorm/Image)
89. Batman Chronicles #14 (DC)
90. Jay & Silent Bob #3 (Oni Press)
91. Giant Superman Annual #1—Replica Edition (DC)
92. Mage: The Hero Defined #11 (Image)
93. Hawkeye: Earth's Mightiest Marksman #1 (Marvel)
94. Green Arrow #137 (DC)
95. Silver Surfer #144 (Marvel)
96. Silver Surfer #145 (Marvel)
97. Daredevil #380 (Marvel)
98. Aquaman #49 (DC)
99. Marvel Annual '98: Heroes for Hire & Quicksilver (Marvel)
100. Gen^{13} Bootleg #21 (WildStorm/Image)

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

'CHASERS BY A NOSE

Battle Chasers #4 (No. 1)
It was a *very* close race, but *Battle Chasers* #4, Joe Madureira's new creator-owned gig, just beat out Joe Mad's former book–*Uncanny X-Men*. Sort of. *Battle Chasers* had a few things on its side: First, it's easily the hottest back-issue item going these days. Second, the four variant covers available on this issue provided a nice sales boost. But perhaps most importantly...

Uncanny X-Men #360 and X-Men #80 (Nos. 2, 3, 80, 86)
Sales on the 35th anniversary X-books were split, with Marvel offering "holographic" and "regular" covers this month. And despite the fact that traditional No. 1 *Uncanny* "officially" dropped from the top slot, the "split cover" gambit worked well. Do the math and you'll see that total sales on *X-Men* and *Uncanny* went up by about seven percent, and the books didn't *really* lose the top spot.

Darkchylde: The Legacy #1 (No. 11)
Be honest–who saw this coming? It's true that Randy Queen's *Darkchylde* is one of the hottest back-issue movers to be found, but few would have predicted that *The Legacy* could have hit No. 11, considering that new issues of *Darkchylde* hit with about the same frequency as presidential elections. Guess it's just testament to the avid, hard-core following for the gal who lives in a nightmare world.

Spider-Girl #1, Spider-Girl #0, A-Next #1, J2 #1 (Nos. 17, 33, 36, 48)
If there's one thing you can be sure of with Marvel's "MC2" line of future heroes, it's that readers think Spider-Girl kicks butt! Not only was *Spider-Girl* #1 the runaway success in the line's debut month, but *Spider-Girl* #0 was the runner-up. And #0 is just a *reprint* of Spider-Girl's first appearance from *What If...?* (vol. 2) #105.

Stone #1 (No. 44)
What's name recognition worth? To Whilce Portacio (*Iron Man*) and Brian Haberlin (*Spawn* colorist), a lot. A No. 44 ranking is a great debut for *Stone*, the premiere title in the new Avalon line and a completely untested property based on Filipino mythology.

Martian Manhunter #0, Annual #1 (Nos. 54, 82)
With *Martian Manhunter*, DC is giving itself a quadruple marketing whammy. August sees a #0 issue and an annual, both of which sold well. September will see Manhunter's #1,000,000 issue, part of a yearly DC company crossover. Finally, in November, DC gives readers a #1 issue. Tack on the Manhunter's JLA tie-in and add John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake, the critically acclaimed creative team behind *The Spectre*, and DC will rake in bucks as green as J'onn J'onzz himself.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple of categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.

CRY HAVOK! Fans want to see what happens to long-time X-Man Havok when he goes to an alternate reality in *Mutant X*.

TOP 10 NO. 1 COMICS

1. Mutant X #1 (Marvel, No. 10)
2. Darkchylde: The Legacy #1 (Homage/Image No. 11)
3. Spider-Girl #1 (Marvel, No. 17)
4. A-Next #1 (Marvel, No. 36)
5. Superman: Save the Planet (Collector's Edition) #1 (DC, No. 42)
6. Stone #1 (Avalon/Image, No. 44)
7. J2 #1 (Marvel, No. 48)
8. Superman: The Dark Side #1 (DC, No. 67)
9. Star Wars: Mara Jade—By The Emperor's Hand #1 (Dark Horse, No. 75)
10. Adventure Comics 80-Page Giant #1 (DC, No. 76)

TOP 10 WILDSTORM COMICS

1. Battle Chasers #4 (No. 1)
2. Darkchylde: The Legacy #1 (No. 11)
3. Crimson #4 (No. 18)
4. Divine Right: T.A.O.M.F #6 (No. 19)
5. Gen^{13} #32 (No. 45)
6. Astro City #17 (No. 47)
7. WildC.A.T.s/Aliens (No. 74)
8. WildCORE #7 (No. 81)
9. Jim Lee's C•23 #5 (No. 88)
10. Gen^{13} Bootleg (No. 100)

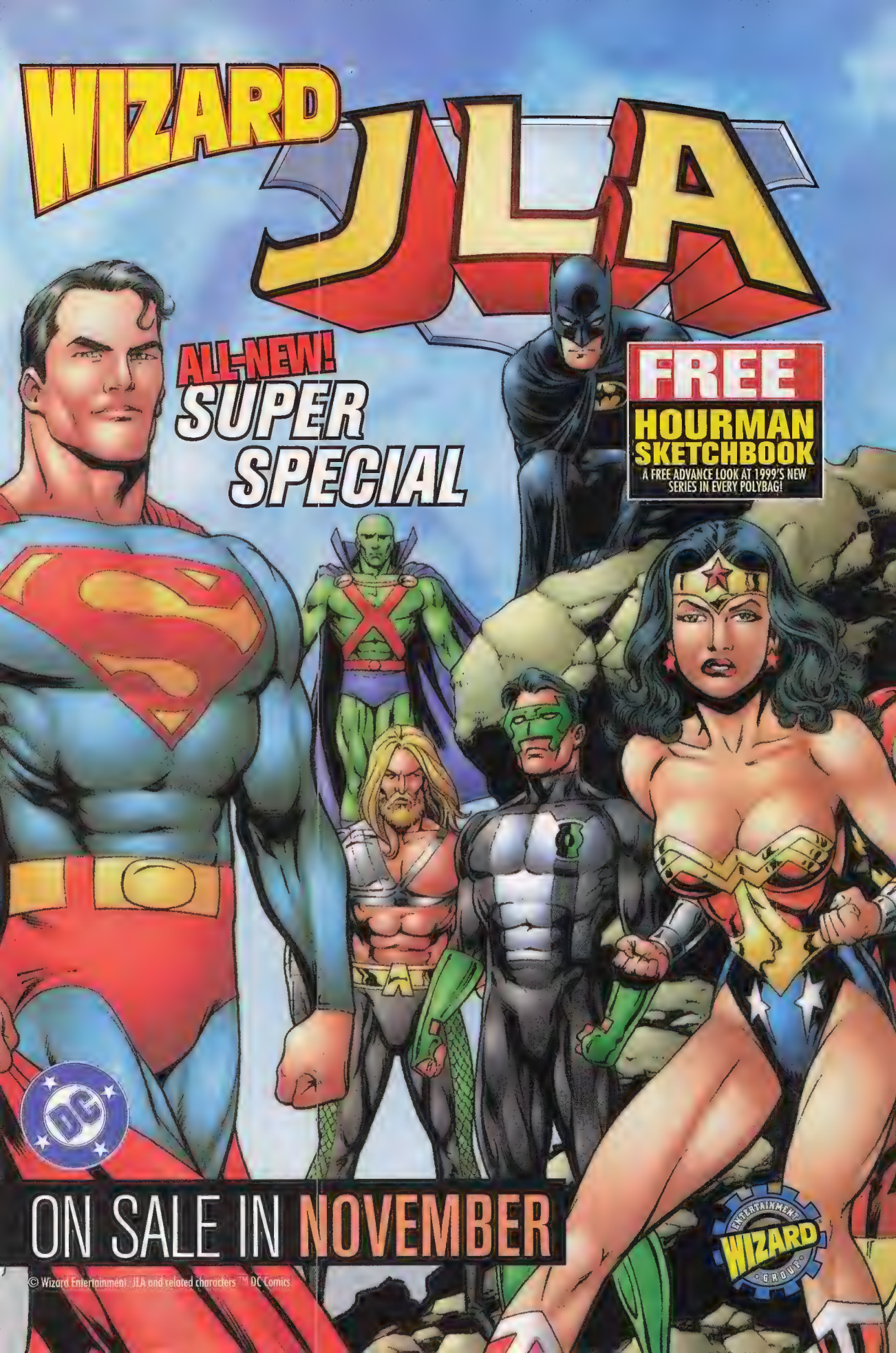
LOOKING BACK

What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. Spawn #17 (Image)
2. Gambit (1st mini-series) #1 (Marvel)
3. X-Men #27 (Marvel)
4. Uncanny X-Men #307 (Marvel)
5. CyberForce (reg. series) #1 (Image)
6. WildC.A.T.s #5 (Image)
7. X-Men 2099 #3 (Marvel)
8. Batman #502 (DC)
9. Detective Comics #669 (DC)
10. X-Force #29 (Marvel)

CAJUN SENSATION Gambit got his first mini-series five years ago and it hit the charts at No. 2.

In August 1993, Marvel launched *Gambit* #1, dis li'l mini-series wit Remy LeBeau, star of de X-Men. It was de hot stuff, like de gumbo. But Marvel chose not to overrun de market wit appearances of de Cajun sensation, like it done wit Wolverine. But de times, dey change, *mon ami*. Look for a new series wit 'ol LeBeau to debut in December. Den we really start cookin'!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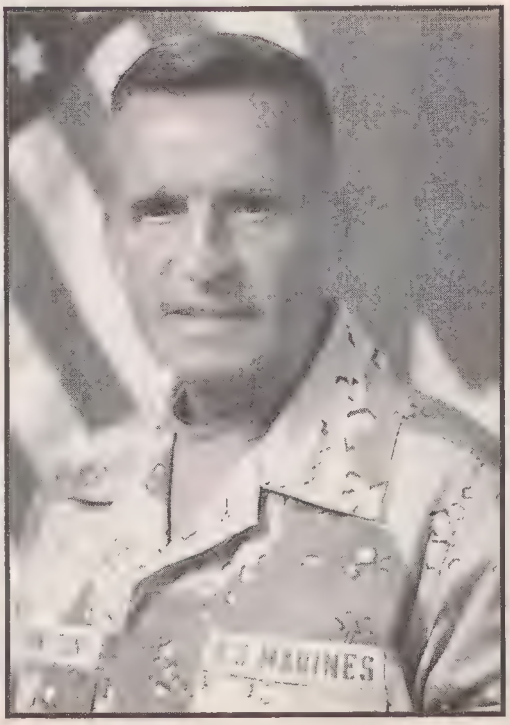

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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Halloween is a pagan holiday originally celebrated by putting the old and infirm in sacks and beating them against rocks. It's true. Anyway, welcome to the special "all-pagan" CBIQ. This month we'll grade you against the most entertaining forms of retribution when a neighbor gives you crappy trick-or-treat goodies. The higher your score, the sweeter the revenge.

SCORE	RANK
0-4	*Smash-o-Lantern!* Make their pumpkin pay for the handful of pennies dropped in your bag.
5-9	*Pile-o-Chew!* Homemade treats sealed in plastic wrap? Give the big "thumbs down" by chewin' em up and hockin' 'em onto the doormat.
10-14	*Stuff-a-ghost!* ...an apple?!? Make them pay for the "good for you" treat by filling the nearest sewer with their decorations.
15	*Roof-a-basket!* Found an empty basket/bowl with a sign that reads "just take one"? See if it's aerodynamic.

1 Dream, Despair, Death, Destiny, Delirium, Desire. Who's the seventh member of Vertigo's The Endless?
a) Destruction
b) Delight
c) Definition
d) Dysentery

2 How does Zatanna, DC's mistress of the mystic arts, work her magic?
a) She uses a wand once possessed by Merlin.
b) She "draws" images in the air with mystic energies.
c) She speaks backward.
d) At $5 the first minute, $2 each additional minute.

3 Tommy Monaghan, DC's Hitman, lives in the worst neighborhood of Gotham City. It's called...
a) Hell's Kitchen.
b) Suicide Slum.
c) The Cauldron.
d) Detroit.

4 Dr. Strange once beat a weakened Galactus by...
a) conjuring up the ghosts of those who have died on all the worlds he's consumed.
b) making him super-sensitive to his hunger pains, in turn making him black out.
c) mimicking the effects of the Ultimate Nullifier and destroying Galactus' energy-siphoning equipment.
d) turning that helmet of his sideways.

5 After being double-crossed by Detective Soams, what did Blockbuster do to the crooked cop?
a) He murdered his family.
b) He broke his neck.
c) He made him the patsy for Blockbuster's crimes.
d) He had a bunch of guys hold him down and he administered the dreaded trouser-waffle. Twice.

6 Fat bad guy Lex Luthor had been–at one time–very dead. How'd he die?
a) He was shot by a disgruntled former employee.
b) He contracted radiation poisoning.
c) He went down in a plane crash.
d) He had complications stemming from the 50 pounds of undigested red meat in his colon.

7 Who was NOT a member of the Fatal Five, the vile superteam that plagued the Legion of Super Heroes?
a) Tharok
b) Persuader
c) Starfinger
d) Mano

8 In *Akira*, what happened to Tetsuo when his powers raged out of control?
a) He split into multiple, younger versions of himself.
b) His skin swelled up, his eyes bugged out and POP!–he was dead.
c) He became a mad "God" and merged all life on earth into one being in hopes of creating a suitable mate.
d) He sent out a telepathic shock wave that made people "less dumber." (Beanie Baby market subsequently collapses.)

9 Who was the leader of the original Masters of Evil?
a) Baron Zemo
b) Mr. Hyde
c) Loki
d) Kiki, the foul-mouthed monkey boy

10 Ouch! Aquaman had one of his hands gnawed off by piranha. Which hand?
a) Left
b) Right
c) ...er, his other left
d) His, ummm...other right

11 The name of the mysterious entity that comes to claim the lives of all the various speedsters in the DC Universe is...
a) Reverse Flash.
b) Kilg%re.
c) Black Flash.
d) Green Apple Quick-Step.

12 Somebody open a window. When Nightcrawler teleports, what does it smell like?
a) Ammonia
b) Brimstone (sulfur)
c) Smoke
d) The Wizard World Convention. So many fanboys, so little Right Guard.

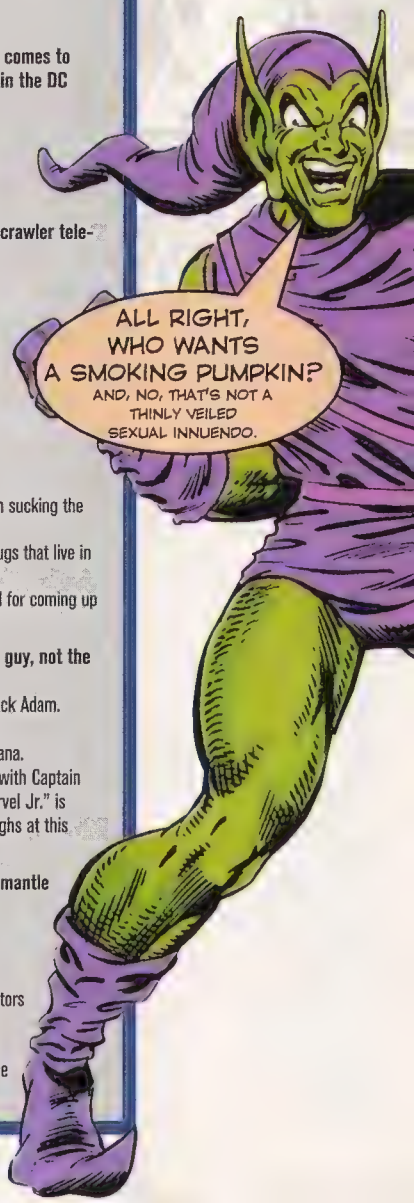
13 Ex-X-Man Maggott has a very special diet–but it's not what he eats, it's how. So...how's he eat?
a) Through small mouths in his palms
b) By vomiting digestive juices on his food then sucking the "melted" meal down
c) By absorbing the nutrients from the giant bugs that live in his body
d) ..."Maggott"? Somebody slap Scott Lobdell for coming up with this guy.

14 How did Captain Marvel's (the Shazam guy, not the dead Kree dude) parents die?
a) They were murdered by that rat-bastard Black Adam.
b) They were "erased" from time in Zero Hour.
c) Their life energies were absorbed by Dr. Sivana.
d) Whatever. We just wanna know what's up with Captain Marvel Jr.'s new name. Granted, "Captain Marvel Jr." is pretty awful, but "CM3"? Geez...Maggott laughs at this guy's name.

15 Who has NOT assumed the murderous mantle of the Green Goblin?
a) Jake Macendale
b) Bart Hamilton
c) Harry Osborn
d) Norman Osborn. Ya know, aren't comic creators who recycle old characters and tarnish classic stories embarrassed that they use such cheap gimmicks as "Surprise...he's NOT dead!" in the place of quality writing?

ANSWERS

Wussies can peek on the next page if this is too tough...



BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Free Food & Flying Eggs

We all came to work and got wet. But it wasn't another ordinary workday at the hallowed halls of the mighty Wizard Entertainment; it was time once again for the annual company picnic at scenic Krucker's in Pomona, N.Y. As the musically inclined staffers broke out their instruments and began to jam, those less-talented began the fun-filled daylight romp with softball, volleyball, basketball, horse shoes, egg-tosses, a home-run derby (congrats to production director Darren Sanchez for winning that "official" event with 11 towering blasts) and, of course, the obligatory picnic water-fight. Armed with water balloons, super-soaker guns and good ol' fashioned buckets of water, the wily staff ensured that NO ONE went home without their underwear getting all wet–causing great discomfort due to much chafing of butts. Of course, there was controversy, as winners of the egg toss were accused of cheating. "Everyone knows the back foot must remain planted," said copy editor Trent McNeeley after a member of the Shamus clan ran forward several feet to make a catch. Senior staff writer Jim McLauchlin defended the Shamus honor (the big butt-kisser), claiming that players "must do whatever it takes to make the catch." If any of you guys out there can help with an official ruling, we'd be much obliged.

FREE BEER The *Wizard* company picnic—a great way to get outta work.

TOP10 Top 10 All Hallow's Eve Supervillain Pranks

10 Jack O' Lantern goes out to TP the *Daily Bugle*, has head smashed in by bat-wielding teenagers.
9 Bullseye kills family of four while egging house.
8 Killer Croc starts to coat the Batmobile in shaving cream when Alfred–sensing evil afoot–scares him off by turning the light by the deck on and off really fast.
7 Joker sneaks up to Commissioner Gordon's house, puts a brown paper bag on the stoop, lights it on fire, rings the bell and runs away. Gordon comes out, stomps on it and WHOOPS!, the bag was full of sleeping kittens. That Joker!
6 Baron Mordo causes people to randomly levitate at family dinners.
5 Juggernaut pulls and pulls at Artie and Leech's masks until they come off and he realizes they weren't masks. Hides their tiny broken bodies in the bushes.
4 Malebolgia turns *all* the black guys on Earth white (WB network subsequently cancels entire fall lineup).
3 The Blob gives out Peanut Chews he found in his rolls of fat from last Halloween.
2 Mastermind keeps casting illusions to make Batroc the Leaper believe France is being invaded to watch the villain surrender repeatedly.
1 Thunderbolts–unable to resist the call of evil–knock on Avengers Mansion door, run away.

CBIQ answers...

1. A 2. C 3. C 4. A 5. B 6. C 7. C 8. B 9. A 10. A 11. C 12. B 13. C 14. A 15. A

ONE OF THE DAMNED

DOING HARD TIME

Cindy Emmert DESIGNER

WHY WE PAY HER: "I make stuff pretty. I do design work on all of Wizard Entertainment's magazines. Mostly columns and departments, but also ads and occasional features. My favorite *Wizard* section is 'Homemade Heroes.'"

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT: "Having my hand kissed by Godzilla at 1998's Wizard World Chicago convention." (Actually, it was cover illustrator Nelson in a chartreuse felt dinosaur costume.)

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE: "Hey, would you unzip something for me?" (When asking online editor Buddy Scalera to decompress a computer file.)

PHOTOS: PAUL SCHIRALDI

TIME TRAVEL

by PATRICK JANKIEWICZ AND JOHN B. LACEY

MUTANT HYSTERIA

Marvel launches record-breaking spinoff 'X-Men' #1 seven years ago

It felt like 1963 all over again.

There stood Magneto, master of magnetism, ready to lead mutants as rulers of humanity. Against him rose the X-Men, a group of young mutants sworn to protect a world that hates and fears them.

That scene had played out many times since *X-Men* #1 (later renamed *Uncanny X-Men*) hit stores in September 1963. But it was October 1991. And with an ominous declaration from their greatest foe, the X-Men began a new era in a second ongoing book, appropriately titled *X-Men*.

Marvel expected sales success, with speculators snatching up #1 issues by the armload in those years. Add in multiple variant covers, a technique that helped set sales records in 1990 for *Spider-Man* #1 and in August 1991 for *X-Force* #1, and it looked like a sure bet. To seal the coup, superstar X-veterans Chris Claremont and Jim Lee wrote and drew the issue. Marvel had it all, and it paid off. *X-Men* #1 sold an unheard of eight million copies—only one comic since has reached half that, when *Superman* #75 topped out around four million copies in 1992.

But sales weren't the only reason for this new title. Launching the book "was a necessity at that point—we had too many characters," Claremont recalls. "The goal was to use *X-Men* #1 as the ultimate jumping-on point for new readers, that if you never read [*Uncanny*] *X-Men* in their 20-odd years at that point and picked up this issue, you would know everything you needed to know about the book and mutants."

Easier said than done. Lee recollects, "There was pressure going in because we knew the sales [thanks to advance orders]. I remember the deadline being very tight and reworking the story many times. First issues are tough because you want to give readers a great story and establish all the characters. That issue had every single X-Men character."

To ensure continuity, *Uncanny* and *X-Men* split those characters into two independent teams (a Blue Team in *X-Men*, and Gold Team in *Uncanny*), but this approach was abandoned soon after to allow popular characters to appear in both books.

Seven years later, the industry has changed in many ways—but remained the same in others. Multiple variant covers? They're still here. Lee? He left Marvel with others to form Image, but has done for-hire work at Marvel as part of the 1996-1997 "Heroes Reborn" event. Claremont? He returned to Marvel as vice president/editorial director earlier this year and now writes *Fantastic Four*. *X-Men*? It's the No. 2 book in the country in sales, right behind *Uncanny*, and the two have been entrenched as top five books ever since the legendary spinoff's debut.

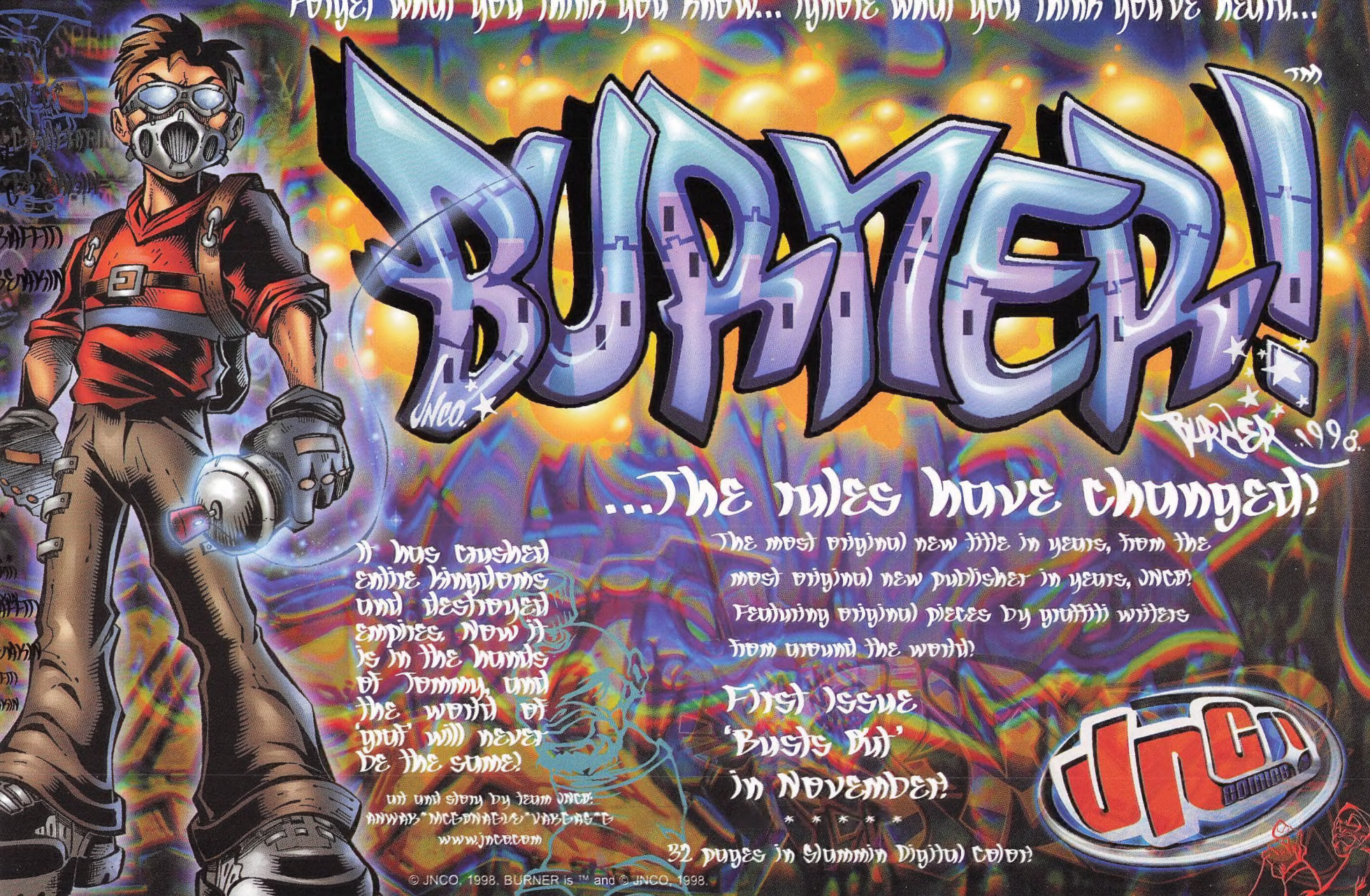
DATELINE

OCTOBER 1991

Hulk Hogan's **"Suburban Commando,"** Danny Devito's "Other People's Money" and "Ernest Scared Stupid" were all playing in audience-free theaters.... **"The Cosby Show"** was in its final season....Mariah Carey became the first artist to have her initial five singles all hit No. 1, with **"Emotions"** ....**Pee-Wee Herman**'s public masturbation scandal made the cover of *Rolling Stone*.

HERMAN

DÉJÀ VU Just like it was in 1963, Magneto once again took on the X-Men in 1991's smash-hit *X-Men* #1.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